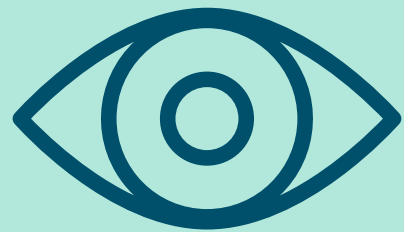


Insight



The public's health and
social care views

October to December 2024

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Introduction

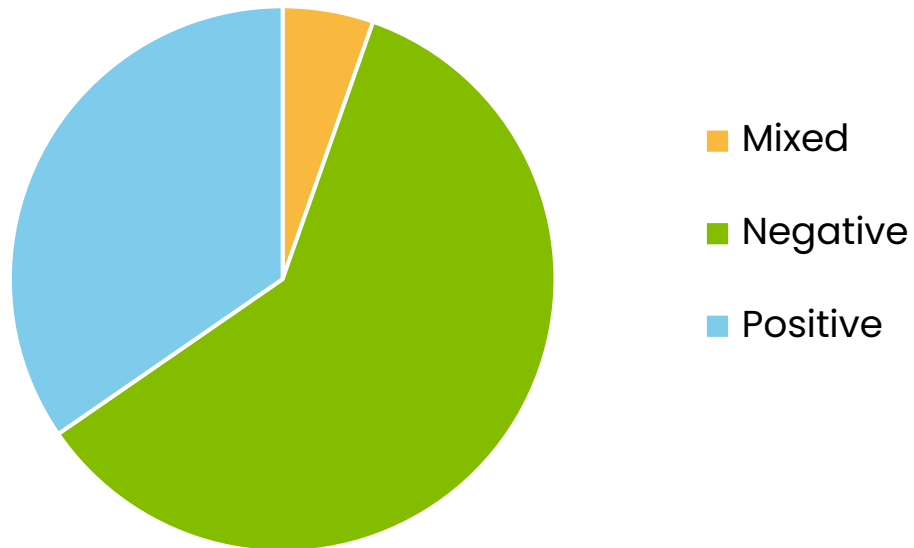
Healthwatch North Yorkshire, the independent champion for people who use NHS and social care services, are listening to what people like about the care they receive, what works well and what they think could be improved.

Healthwatch North Yorkshire produce a monthly patient experiences log which brings together feedback from people who have been in touch with us, have talked to us at events or have responded via Care Opinion (which is the UK's leading independent feedback website, enabling patients to share their experiences of healthcare services). These logs provide a snapshot of people's positive and negative experiences of health and care services across the county. The feedback we receive each month varies but there is often feedback about GP services, hospital care, social care, dentistry, and mental health services to name a few.

This report provides a summary of the public's experiences from October to December 2024. We received feedback from 149 people via our phone line, website, email and through events. Please note, this figure does not include the feedback we have gathered for specific projects via surveys and focus groups and does not include the feedback we have received via our visits to care homes (known as **enter and view** visits).

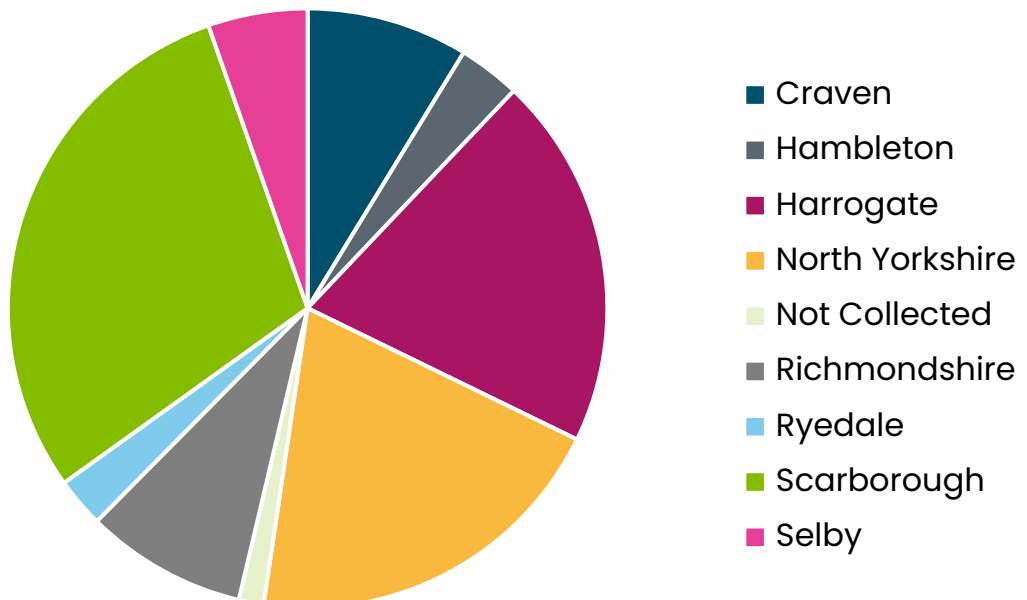
60% of the feedback was negative, 35% positive and the remaining feedback was mixed.

Sentiment of feedback



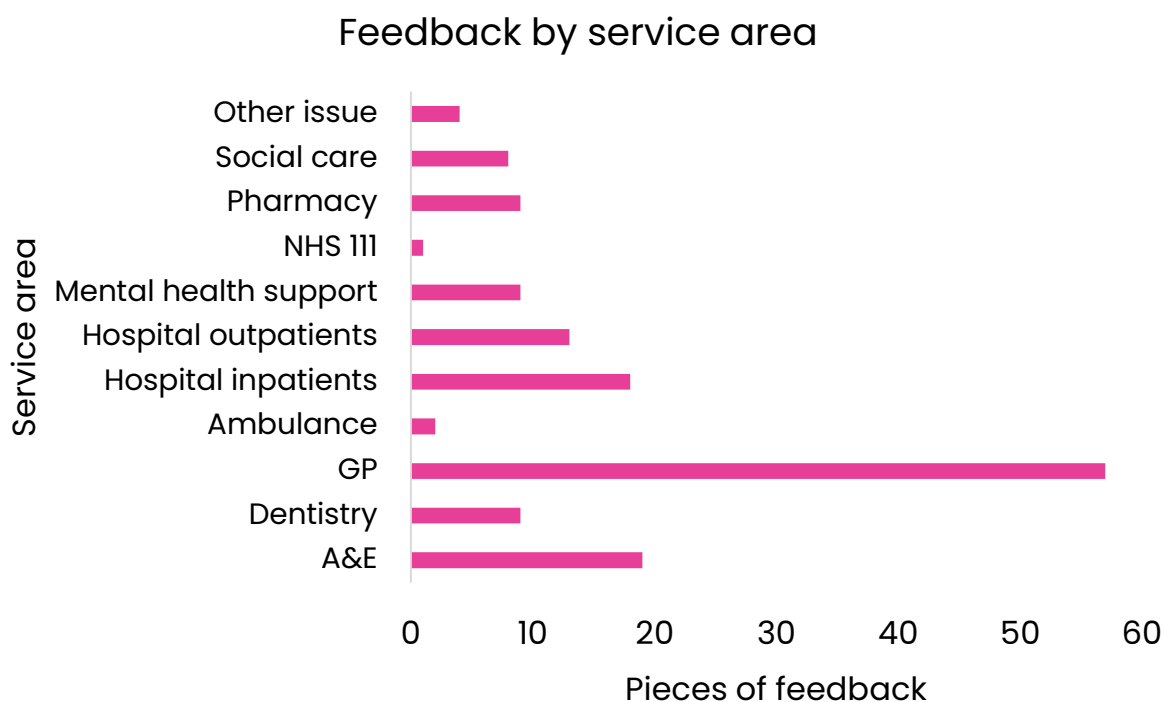
There was a spread of feedback from across the different districts of North Yorkshire, as shown below.

Feedback by area



Feedback by service area

We received the most feedback about GP services (43%), followed by hospital care (23%)¹, accident and emergency services (14%)² and dentistry (7%).



In addition to those mentioned above, we also received feedback this quarter about pharmacies, social care (such as care homes and care at home) and mental health support services.

¹ Hospital care includes outpatient appointments, inpatient care and accident and emergency.

² Accident and emergency, including minor injury units.

Feedback about GP services

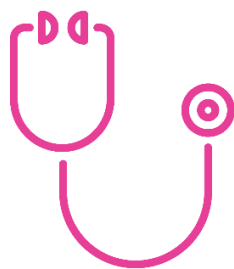
What the public told us



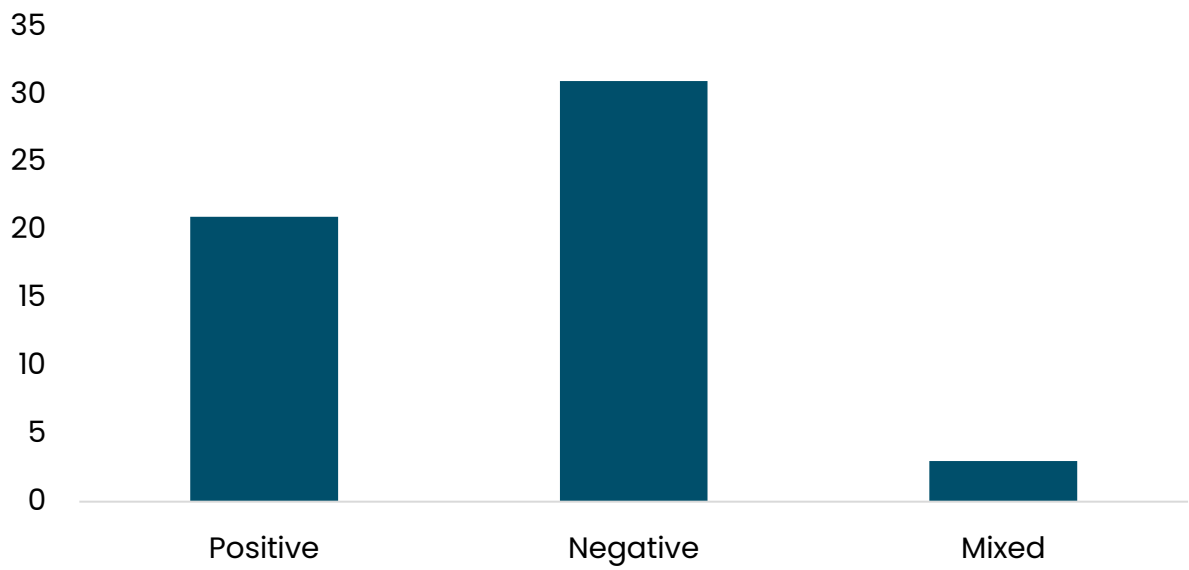
Around 56% of the feedback about GP (general practitioner) services was negative, 38% positive and 6% mixed.

The most re-occurring theme in this quarter centred around communication and accessibility of care in GP practices/surgeries. Many individuals describe their frustrations with poor communication from their practice, whether it's long waiting times for appointments, a lack of follow-up on health issues, or being dismissed by staff.

On the other hand, most of the positive feedback that was given about GP practices mentioned patient satisfaction with the professionalism, efficiency and care that they received from staff. People mentioned although it may be difficult to get a GP appointment at times, when they do, the staff that they met with were friendly and supportive.



Sentiment of GP feedback



We received feedback about 55 different GP practices across North Yorkshire. The practices that received the most feedback are explored in more detail on the next pages.



Fisher Medical Practice, Craven

There were five people who shared feedback about this practice, all of which, were negative.

The feedback provided about this practice has an overriding theme of a decline in professionalism and efficiency, particularly since the pandemic. One person mentioned that on a couple of occasions, nurses at the practice tried turning them away without checking their records. Similarly, another mentioned that records are often not accurately reviewed, leading to missed appointments, duplicate bookings and confusion for both staff members and patients.

One person highlighted the accessibility problems of the practices online system, as it is not accessible outside of office hours. Alongside this, they mentioned that it is extremely difficult to be able to speak to a person at the practice.

Issues with medication delays has been highlighted by one individual who mentioned that as the practice was shut for 48 hours, they missed multiple doses of medication because of a forgotten repeat prescription by the surgery.

“I have noticed a **decline in the professionalism** and overall efficiency of this practice since the pandemic. Records are not checked properly, staff don't seem to know what's going on and things get missed, mixed up and confused”.

“This is definitely not the service we had a few years ago!”

“I found the experience at Fisher Medical Practice rather **unprofessional** from the nurse, as she tried to turn me away as soon as I sat in the chair”.

Eastfield Medical Centre, Scarborough

There were five pieces of feedback received about this practice. Four pieces were negative, and one was mixed.

The most mentioned issue from patients of this practice highlighted problems with repeat prescription processing. One patient mentioned that the online system showed medications as “undetermined” for an extended period, and the patient was not notified when the medications required a review by a clinician. This led to the patient missing medication.

There were a handful of instances of poor communication between healthcare professionals. For example, a neurology consultant’s letter from the hospital with medication recommendations on were not acted on by the GP for two weeks, causing delays in treatment.

One patient mentioned that the practice is lacking permanent doctors and is relying on locum doctors, leading to an inconsistency in care. The patient expressed concern about the inadequate response to blood requests and poor service overall.

“I understand that the practice is lacking permanent doctors, being staffed by locums [fully qualified doctors who temporarily fills in for an absent GP at a hospital or doctor's surgery]. We have found the staff at reception unfailingly friendly and sympathetic, as have been the two different doctors who have seen my wife who has complex needs and who really needs a

single GP to take responsibility. However, this does not explain the **repeated breakdowns** in **essential communication** between the GPs and us as patients, between hospital consultants and the GPs, and it would appear between all of these and reception”.

“Is the surgery short-staffed or has it too many patients on its books? Either way, **it's service is currently poor**”.

Nidderdale Group Practice, Harrogate

There were three people who shared their views on this practice. Two pieces of feedback were positive, and one was negative.

The two pieces of positive feedback highlighted how easy and efficient the online booking systems are. Alongside the friendly consultations and effective referrals to hospital.

One individual mentioned in his feedback that his wife’s deterioration in health was ignored by the practice, with records showing that she had stopped taking her medication due to her condition, with her blood tests highlighting her worsening condition. Despite this, he was never told about this, nor was she ‘cared for’ by the practice. It was not until she was taken into hospital with extreme ill health that her husband discovered the lack of patient-centred care from the GP.

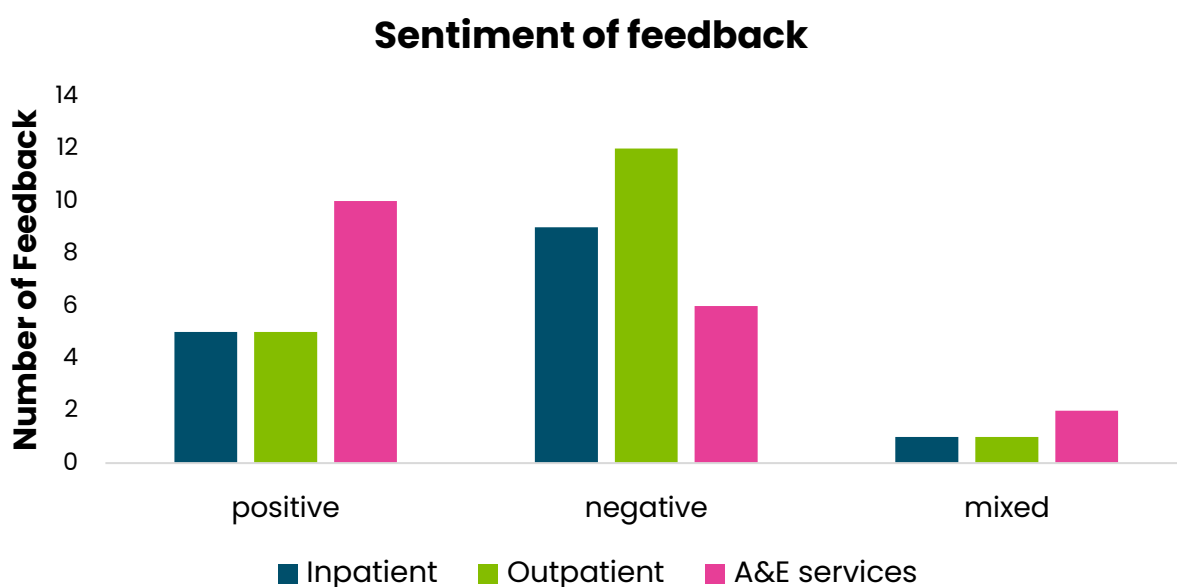
“The **prompt and friendly** consultation, attention, diagnosis and recommended treatment was **outstanding!** It really could not have been better!”

Feedback about hospital care

Around 39% of feedback about hospital care was positive, 53% negative and 8% mixed or neutral.

Professionalism, kindness and efficiency of hospital staff was a re-occurring theme from the positive feedback. Whereas the negative feedback focussed on the lack of communication between hospital departments and staff.

A lot of feedback praised the kindness and compassion that they experienced during their hospital visits, stating that staff made them feel very comfortable and treated the patients with respect and dignity. Many of the negative pieces of feedback centred around the difficulty in accessing hospital services. Patients stated that they were often passed around between various clinics and hospitals with no real indication of diagnosis. Difficulty in access due to lack of transport services and poor parking arrangements was also raised.



Scarborough Hospital

There were 10 people who shared their views on Scarborough Hospital, with four of these being positive, five negative and one mixed.

Most of the positive feedback praised the compassionate and attentive care provided by the doctors and nurses in the hospital. Several individuals express their gratitude for the kindness, professionalism and respect shown by staff in various departments. The patients or their families felt heard, comfortable and well-cared for during their visits, even during potentially stressful or vulnerable moments.

Alternatively, the key issue amongst the negative feedback was around the poor accessibility and quality of care in Scarborough hospital. Multiple pieces of feedback included the lack of cleanliness and hygiene in the hospital. In addition to this, people mentioned the lack of easy access to the hospital for those with physical disabilities as there is a limited number of disabled parking bays. In addition, the relocation of certain services, such as ophthalmology, adds to the challenges that patients face in receiving timely and convenient care.

“Accessing local hospital urgent ophthalmology care was **extremely difficult, time consuming, expensive and chaotic** – primarily because the service at the local hospital has been moved 45 miles away. **Clinical care good, accessibility appalling.**”

“The staff was very **friendly, helpful and kind** to my boyfriend steven when he was in hospital, and they were very caring”.

Harrogate Hospital

There were eight people who shared their views on Harrogate Hospital. Six were negative and the remaining two were positive.

The main issue mentioned by those with negative experiences mentioned the lack of appropriate care whilst in hospital and poor coordination between staff. Inadequate communication was evident through a lack of timely transfer of discharge notes between Harrogate hospital to other hospitals, where a patient had been transferred.

One person mentioned that their family member had to wait hours for the inpatient pharmacy to dispense their medication. Despite the nurse repeatedly phoning the pharmacy to see how much longer it would take, the discharge medication would not turn up, further delaying discharge.

One person mentioned that their diagnosis at Harrogate Hospital was not followed with appropriate support or referrals, leaving them to struggle with no adequate treatment or care plan.

Alternatively, the positive feedback suggested that access to services were extremely easy and an overall great experience, from the receptionist interaction through to the diagnosis. Those that gave positive feedback, mentioned that it was an efficient and smooth service.

“The prompt and friendly consultation, attention, diagnosis and recommended **treatment was outstanding!** It really could not have been better!”

“Family members and the nursing staff on the ward had to repeatedly phone the on-site pharmacy to find out when the tablets would be ready. **This is an ongoing problem at this hospital and inconveniences the patient** and their relatives and presumably means the bed was blocked from being used by another patient.”

“**Parking here is a nightmare.** I was very fortunate to drop on to a vacant disabled space but for other people, they didn't appear as fortunate.”

York Hospital

There were six pieces of feedback about York Hospital. Five pieces were negative and one mixed.

Patients mentioned that during their stays in York Hospital, they are repeatedly asked the same questions by different healthcare professionals, which they felt wasted both the patients and the doctors time and could be avoided if the information were properly recorded and shared across the systems.

This leads onto another individual mentioning that there is a sense of poor communication not only between the wards and departments in the hospital, but also from York hospital and patient's GP surgeries. As a result, they were left in the dark about important decisions and treatment plans, causing issues with the continuity of care after discharge.

The mixed piece of feedback mentioned that whilst the communication between departments was slow and often

frustrating, the staff that cared for them treated them with kindness and professionalism.

“Upon transfer from A&E to the ward, the same questions are asked by every different person interacting with patient. **Total waste of time**... Being given contradictory information from different staff members.”

“**All staff were friendly and accommodating**. My pain was recognised, assessed, and medicated. Communication between departments was slow or non-existent.”

Friarage Hospital

There were three people who shared their views about the Friarage Hospital, two were positive and one was mixed.

One person mentioned the efficiency of the online system, whereby all patient's notes can be accessed almost immediately by the patient after their appointment. They mentioned that as soon as they left their outpatient appointment, they received a message on their phone with an update of their next appointment.

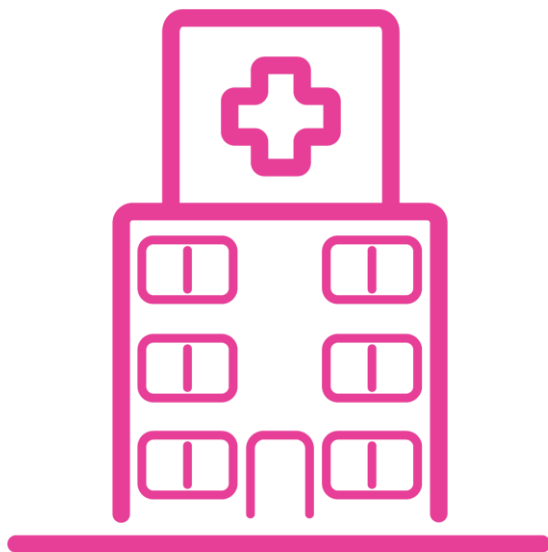
Another person mentioned the positive experience that they had with every interaction with doctors, nurses and caterers in the hospital. They mentioned that they kept the patients well informed but also showed a great level of kindness and friendliness whilst staying professional.

The mixed piece of feedback mentioned that whilst the doctors that they saw were very professional and kind, the experience that they had with the nurses was a negative one as one person

mentioned that “the nurses could have been friendlier” during their stay.

“I came for surgery last week and every single member of staff was lovely, including the nurses and caterers. Despite a slight delay, they really looked after me, **always smiling and laughing and joking** with all of us in the waiting room. I was always kept informed as to what was happening and **couldn't have been more at ease.** ”

“Team, thank you. **A great experience.** By the time I left outpatients I had a message on my mobile with access to a letter confirming my new appointment, late next year.”



Feedback about accident and emergency (A&E)

There were seventeen pieces of feedback about accident and emergency departments, including minor injury units. Ten pieces of feedback were positive, six were negative and one mixed.

The key theme in the positive pieces of feedback was around the kindness of the A&E staff. People mentioned that although the waiting times may be lengthy, the doctors and nurses made up for the waiting times with their compassionate and caring nature.

On the other hand, the negative feedback focused on the sense of abandonment that those felt when they were in the waiting area. People mentioned that they often felt like they were forgotten about and that triage in A&E often doesn't work effectively for the patient.

Scarborough Hospital A&E

Scarborough Hospital A&E received the most feedback with six people sharing their experiences. Four pieces of feedback were positive, with people mentioning the friendliness and kindness of the doctors, nurses and receptionists. One person mentioned that the staff came out and offered tea and coffee to anyone waiting to be seen, which made their experience a relaxing one.

One piece of feedback was negative as they mentioned that they were left on a trolley in a “cold corridor” for five hours after experiencing a stroke.

The final piece of mixed feedback mentioned that the department was quick and efficient as they received an x-ray in record time. However, there was little diagnosis or explanation as to what was wrong and the patient was sent on their way, with the hospital stating that they will be in touch.

“I recently visited A&E, staff at the desk were pleasant and I was directed to the children’s waiting room, I was seen within ten minutes by a doctor who listened to what had happened to my daughter and how this had happened previously, he checked her over and popped her elbow back in, **he was kind** and also gave her a teddy, it was a quick visit, **I felt listened to**, by kind people and my daughters injury was dealt with.”

“I was left on a trolley in a cold corridor for five hours after my stroke”.

Other A&E departments

There were various comments about a variety of other accident and emergency departments in North Yorkshire. There were 11 pieces of feedback about A&E; six were positive and five were negative. All positive feedback commented on the friendliness and professionalism of the staff in the department. In addition, most pieces of feedback mentioned that the waiting times were minimal.

Whitby Hospital received positive feedback, stating that once they arrived at A&E, they were treated within the hour, including getting an x-ray. Additionally, they mentioned that all the staff that they saw were friendly and professional, resulting in an overall positive experience.

Another person praised the staff in both **Malton Community Hospital** and **York Hospital** as her grandson was rushed in after struggling to breathe. She said that from initial treatment in Malton Hospital through to being transferred to York Hospital, all members of staff were exceptional, and the service was very efficient.

On the other hand, the negative pieces of feedback others mentioned were that the waiting time to be seen by a doctor was too long, often being over five hours. One person attended A&E in **James Cook Hospital** and left after four hours of waiting as she felt like her condition was worsening whilst being in the waiting room. Similarly, another person in **Airedale Hospital** said that after two hours waiting, she ended up leaving and getting her family to keep an eye on her condition at home as people that had arrived before her still had not been seen by a doctor.

“It was awful and traumatic. I was in severe pain, worse than during labour. I was ignored, dismissed and belittled. One nurse rolled her eyes at me when I asked for pain relief. I ended up needing surgery to remove a necrotic lesion from my colon, but the A&E doctor told me to go home and take paracetamol.”

“The staff were absolutely amazing and restored my faith in the NHS. He was seen in record time and transferred to York Hospital in record time”.

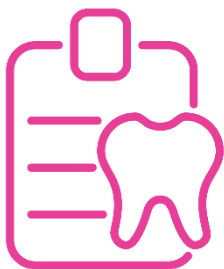
Feedback about dentistry

There were nine pieces of feedback about dentistry, all of which, were negative.

All pieces of feedback focussed on the difficulty in obtaining an NHS dentist in North Yorkshire. Many people mentioned that the dentist they were previously registered with before the pandemic, are no longer providing NHS dentistry. Alongside this, it is becoming increasingly difficult to access a new NHS dentist as many are no longer undertaking NHS work and are instead only offering private treatment.

Many people mentioned that they have not been to a dentist in years since they are unable to access an NHS dentist and due to the cost of living, are unable to afford to go private. One person mentioned that this has now caused him to have various oral issues which the NHS now have to investigate and diagnose as a result.

“The lack of accessible NHS dentistry in the area is **a failure** especially in an area that experiences high levels of those **living in poverty** or on the breadline who cannot afford private dentistry.”



Other feedback

Mental health support

There were seven pieces of feedback about mental health services in North Yorkshire, all of which, were negative.

All those people who shared feedback about mental health services expressed their disappointment with the service provided. With some saying that there is no service at all.

One person mentioned that the waiting list to get referred to mental health support in North Yorkshire takes years and when they did eventually get the support, it was ill-informed and not helpful.

Another person mentioned that they felt that the mental health service for her child was not engaging enough as it was online. As a healthcare professional herself, she felt very let down by the system.

“Almost nonexistent. Uncaring patient blaming and not only unfit for purpose but has done me very real harm.”

“I have been absolutely appalled by **the lack of empathy** and support I have.”

Pharmacies

There were ten pieces of feedback about pharmacies, seven of them being positive, two negative and one mixed.

Several pieces of feedback mentioned the effective use of online booking systems for flu and covid vaccinations. All the feedback mentioned how easy the booking systems were to use, being given an allocated time slot and being seen within five minutes of arriving at the pharmacy.

Skipton Pharmacy received the most feedback, all the comments being positive. One person mentioned that the pharmacy is very quick and efficient when preparing prescriptions and always call a week after starting a new medication to make sure that it is okay for the patient.

Both pieces of negative feedback centred around hospital inpatient and outpatient pharmacies. One person mentioned that they drove over an hour to pick up their cancer medication from James Cook Hospital and was informed that it is not in stock and will have to come back once it had arrived. This left them without their cancer medication for a few days.

“We booked our winter vaccinations at our local pharmacy. It is **quicker and easier** than trying to get an appointment at a GP. I used the NHS email link I was sent. It was very easy.”

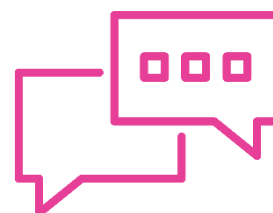
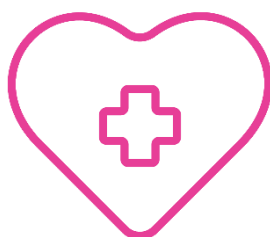
Conclusion

This summary report highlights that access continues to be the key issue for many, whether it be access to GP appointments, hospital appointments or dentists.

However, when people do receive treatment and support, they are often positive about the care they have received and tend to be appreciative of the caring and hard-working staff.

We ask that service providers and commissioners who are mentioned in this report act on the feedback and insight and where possible share with us what actions they have or intend to take to remedy these concerns. Our next insight report will be based on feedback from January to March 2025.

Thank you to the people who shared their feedback with us, your voices will help inform and shape health and care services across North Yorkshire.



healthwatch
North Yorkshire



**Committed
to quality**

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit so that we can be certain of this.

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