

Healthwatch Quarterly Impact Report

**Quarter 3: October to December
2024**

healthwatch
in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

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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



132 people have reviewed services on our feedback websites



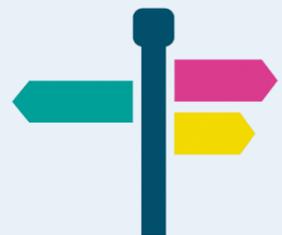
We have escalated or referred **108** of your complaints or concerns



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



We've helped signpost **166** of you looking for advice via our contact centres



We've released our Report on **the new Royal Eye Infirmary in Plymouth**, available to read by [clicking here](#)



We shared Healthwatch England's Annual report highlighting the experiences of **over 400,000** people





Our News in Brief

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

We are supporting the NHS in Devon to transform health and social care

In November the NHS in Devon launched local engagement around the 10 Year Health Plan, which runs in parallel with the national Change NHS campaign.

All Devon residents are invited to share their experiences, views and ideas for improving the NHS. People are being encouraged to fill in the local survey even if they have already completed the national one, to ensure that local insights are used to improve local services.

There is a dedicated webpage available via www.onedevon.org.uk/10-year-plan with a link to the local survey and further information, including

details about a series of engagement events happening across the county in January 2025. They offer an opportunity to speak with NHS Staff about the 10 Year Health Plan to get your voice heard as part of the development process, with the national plan due to launch in spring 2025.

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay will be independently chairing these engagement days across Devon. On these days there will also be workshops to understand people's experiences of NHS services, what is working well, where there are challenges and what the NHS should prioritise. These workshops will take place either face to face at locations across Devon or online. Dr Kevin Dixon, Chair of Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, said:

 "Healthwatch are really pleased to have supported the development of this engagement programme for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and we are excited to be collaborating with NHS Devon on such an important conversation. I urge the Devon population to get involved in this engagement and have their voice heard as part of the national 10-year health plan development. It really could make a huge difference to the way your future healthcare is delivered."



We are also supporting this engagement by offering people who are unable to submit their feedback online the chance to do it over the phone for free. People can access this support by calling us on **Freephone 0800 520 0640**. You can view our promotional video of this engagement via: <https://shorturl.at/aTE89>

Impact : As patients, members of the public, or frontline staff, you see directly what's working and what could be improved. The NHS can only be made fit for the future if they learn from your experiences and your priorities. Your feedback from this engagement will directly inform the development of the government's 10-Year Health Plan for England.





Patient Experiences of Royal Eye Infirmary in Plymouth

This quarter we released a new engagement report which collates and summarises patient feedback and experiences of the new Royal Eye Infirmary (REI) building in Plymouth.

In October 2023, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust's (UHP) Royal Eye Infirmary (REI) service moved from its location at Derriford Hospital to a new purpose-built building in the International Business Park near to the Derriford Hospital Site. Earlier this year Healthwatch Plymouth (HWP) conducted visits to the REI to engage with patients around their experiences of the new facility. This engagement report collates and summarises this patient feedback.

Read a brief summary of the key findings and recommendations below or click the following link to read the report in full: <https://cdn.whitebearplatform.com/hwplymouth/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/07092654/HWP-REI-Patient-Experience-Summary-Report-2024.pdf>

Key Findings

- Overall, the majority of patient feedback gathered at the REI in March 2024 has been positive, both about the service and the staff.
- Patient feedback relating to the period of time when the building opened in October 2023 to January 2024 tends to raise more issues. Some patient comments reflect the understanding that the service has been making improvements in this timeframe.
- Main issues raised include parking and transport, interior and exterior signage, and waiting times for appointments and follow-up.

Our Recommendations

1. There is scope for UHP to work directly with the sight loss group, part of the Sensory Solutions service at the Improving Lives Plymouth Mannamead community hub. This could provide opportunity to better understand needs and concerns of patients and increase patient confidence in being heard.
2. The issue of a safe pedestrian crossing outside the REI needs to be prioritised with the Local Authority.
3. The new building would benefit from a mini-Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) undertaken by Patient Council and Healthwatch Plymouth assessors to assess areas such as Disability Access (including Hearing Loops), Signage and Privacy and Dignity.



"Thank you to Healthwatch for conducting this engagement and providing valuable insights into the experiences of patients attending the Royal Eye Infirmary (REI). We are pleased to hear that the majority of feedback from March 2024 has been positive, and we are encouraged by comments praising our staff's professionalism and quality improvement efforts. The areas highlighted for improvement, particularly those relating to parking, signage, and waiting times, are important to us, and we are committed to addressing them."

Response from University Hospitals Plymouth

Impact : This report has been shared with One Devon and NHS Devon Integrated Care Board and University Hospitals Plymouth, who have committed to addressing the issues raised in the report. A pedestrian crossing has now been implemented as part of the adjacent retail park development. We will continue to monitor feedback from Carers and ensure any new issues or concerns raised or further suggestions are shared with service leaders for their response.

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

Public's confusion over 'right' to register with an NHS dentist – Healthwatch England released the first-ever research on people's understanding of NHS dentistry and what they want from the service. The poll reveals that most people in England have misconceptions about their 'right' to an NHS dentist and want changes to how they access dentistry. Key Healthwatch England findings, recommendations and some of our own key local stats are below:

Key Healthwatch England findings

- Over two-thirds, 68%, of respondents mistakenly believe they have the right to register with an NHS dentist as they do with an NHS GP.
- When asked about their preference for getting NHS dental care, over half, 54% of 1,791 respondents said they want to be able to register with an NHS dentist as a permanent patient in the same way as they can with an NHS GP.

Healthwatch England recommendations (for the government and NHS England):

1. NHS dentistry should be reformed to give everyone a GP-style right to be permanently registered with a dental practice to get both preventative and urgent care throughout their lifetime.
2. The public should be consulted on any proposals being considered for long-term reform of NHS dentistry.
3. The new patient payment introduced for dentists from March 1, 2024, should be evaluated and any findings published.
4. Dental practices should clearly communicate to people what they need to do to be maintained as an NHS patient.
5. Public awareness of how the NHS dental system works should be improved, to help people consider or plan for alternative sources of care if their practice chooses to stop providing NHS care.

Download the Full Report - <https://shorturl.at/Lgtkm>

HWE 2023 – 24 annual report – Healthwatch England have released their latest 2023 – 24 annual report. The report outlines how the public's stories have changed care for the better, and the work they're doing to make sure that the health and social care system puts patients at its very heart. Last year, over 400,000 people shared their experiences of care with Healthwatch England nationally and locally. Throughout the report, you can read just some of the stories that help Healthwatch understand the struggles people face when it comes to their care, and how things can be better. A snapshot of their year in review is on the next page.

Download the Full Report - <https://cdn.whitebearplatform.com/hwtorbay/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/08145241/20240107-HWE-Annual-Report-2024.pdf>

LARGE PRINT VERSION AVAILABLE HERE - <https://cdn.whitebearplatform.com/hwtorbay/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/08145742/Healthwatch-annual-report-large-print.pdf>

Our year in review

We supported more than one million people to have their say and get information about their care.

Top stories from 2023-24

Spring



The primary care recovery plan addressed key issues people have raised with us about GPs and other services.

Summer



Our research showed how delayed care impacts patients and set out the steps decision-makers must take to address this.

Autumn



A stocktake of 65,000 people's NHS and social care experiences revealed the barriers many face to timely care.



Our insight on hospital discharge highlighted how the Government and NHS staff can make improvements.

Winter



The NHS approved a plan to improve the six-week postnatal check after our survey found this check-up was failing new parents.



Our new campaign for social care reform started with the first research to gauge unmet need among disabled adults.



Our patient vision report outlined where people want the NHS to be in 2030, and set out a path to get there.



The dental care recovery plan came out after we gave evidence to the parliamentary Health and Social Care Committee.



The NHS introduced simplified waiting times standards for cancer after we reported people's experiences of trying to get care.

Who we've helped

Healthwatch England



219,761

people used our service to get clear information and advice

13,505

people shared their experiences of care

The local Healthwatch network



929,544

people used our service to get clear information and advice

390,049

people shared their experiences of care

Impact: What we do with these reports and briefings

HWDPT contribute real local public feedback to all of HWE's reports and briefings. We share these with key stakeholders, including health and social care providers & commissioners, the Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board, our local authorities, Local Care Partnerships and the voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE) sector.

Healthwatch England Reports Coming Next Quarter

January – Eye care campaign

February – Trauma survivors

March – Trans people's experiences of healthcare



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 HWDPT, gathering feedback and taking the opportunity to discuss and share issues or experiences included:

healthwatch Devon

- Newton Abbot, Barnstaple & Exeter Libraries
- East Devon Vaccination Centre
- Tavistock CVS Wellbeing Fair
- Moving Forward Event Honiton
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events

healthwatch Plymouth

- Thrive Plymouth Exhibition & Conference
- St Budeaux & Barne Barton Wellbeing Hub
- Livewell SW Wellbeing Connections
- Derriford Hospital drop in
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events.

healthwatch Torbay

- Torbay Hospital & Torquay Library drop-ins
- Carers Rights Day in Paignton
- Paignton Community Hub
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events

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

- www.healthwatchdevon.co.uk
- www.healthwatchplymouth.co.uk
- www.healthwatchtorbay.org.uk



Becky Hodgson of Healthwatch gathering NHS views at the Beat The Freeze Event in Torbay

Community Event helps to 'Beat the Freeze'

This quarter we attended a special event in Paignton to help provide local people with energy advice and financial support during the Winter months.

Paignton Community Hub, based at Paignton Library, hosted their 'Beat the Freeze' event in partnership with Torbay Health and Wellbeing Voluntary Sector Network, Engaging Communities South West, and Healthwatch Torbay.

The event also gave local residents the chance to share their experiences, views and ideas for improving the NHS as part of the new NHS 10 year plan. Healthwatch Torbay were gathering people's opinions and thoughts to support the NHS in Devon's local engagement on the plan, which runs in parallel with the national 'Change NHS' campaign.

Claire Bithell, Torbay VCSE Network Coordinator & Paignton Community Hub Lead, said:

"For many people, it is difficult to find out about these services and the financial support available or to get energy advice. That's why we hosted this special in-person event to support those who may not be aware of, or able to, access the support available. We are delighted that so many local people were supported on the day by so many wonderful organisations. I'd like to thank them all for making our Big Freeze Event such a success. There was a real buzz around the hub as connections were made and people supported in a safe and warm space."

To view a short video of the event, click here:

<https://shorturl.at/PyFVE>



Healthwatch Feedback

Where we gathered your experiences from in the past three months

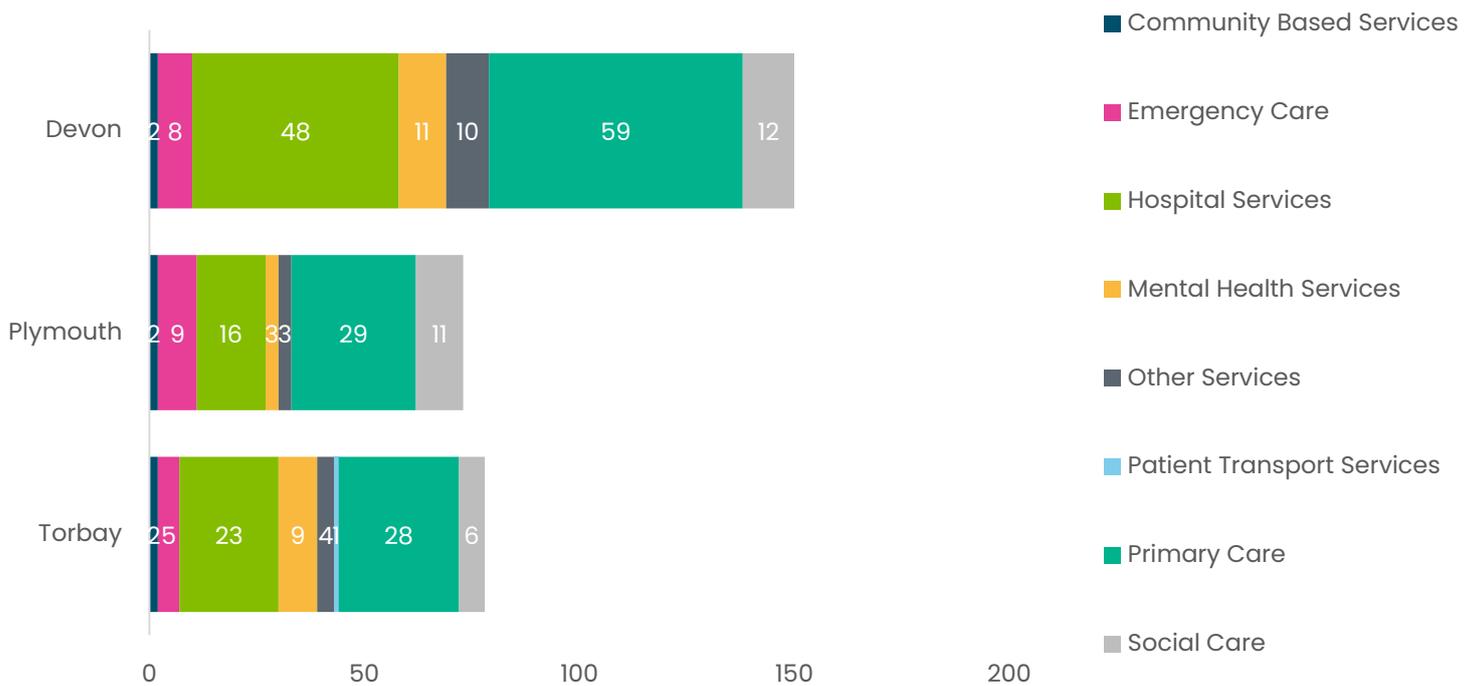
Number of experiences shared with Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay

Through online, community or organic engagement, **302** people contacted Healthwatch to share their experiences of health and social care services in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. **150** were about services in Devon, **73** about Plymouth services and **78** about Torbay services. We also had **1** experience on a service out of area.

132 of these experiences were shared with us at HWDPT through one of our three online rate and review feedback centres, with **166** handled by our contact centre in person.

Source of Feedback shared with HWDPT and Type of Service

Breakdown of feedback recorded by service level and locality – Oct to Dec 2024



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

Feedback about Primary Care Services

117 experiences (38.74% of overall feedback) were about primary care services, of those:

- **91** experiences related to GP Services
- **15** experiences related to Dental Services
- **10** experiences related to Pharmacy Services and
- **1** experience related to Opticians Services

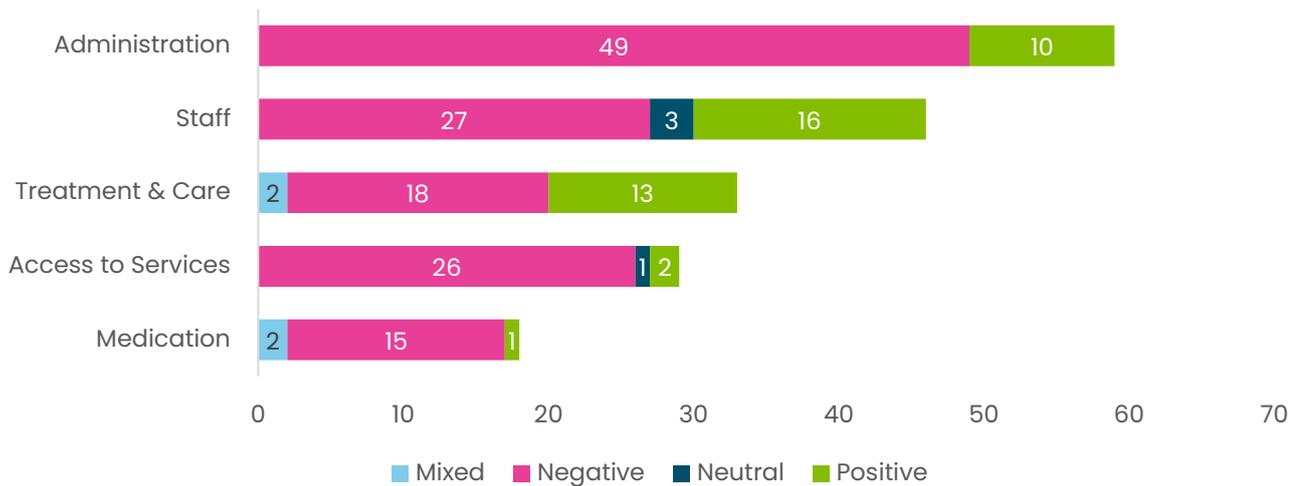


Feedback about Primary Care Services (continued)

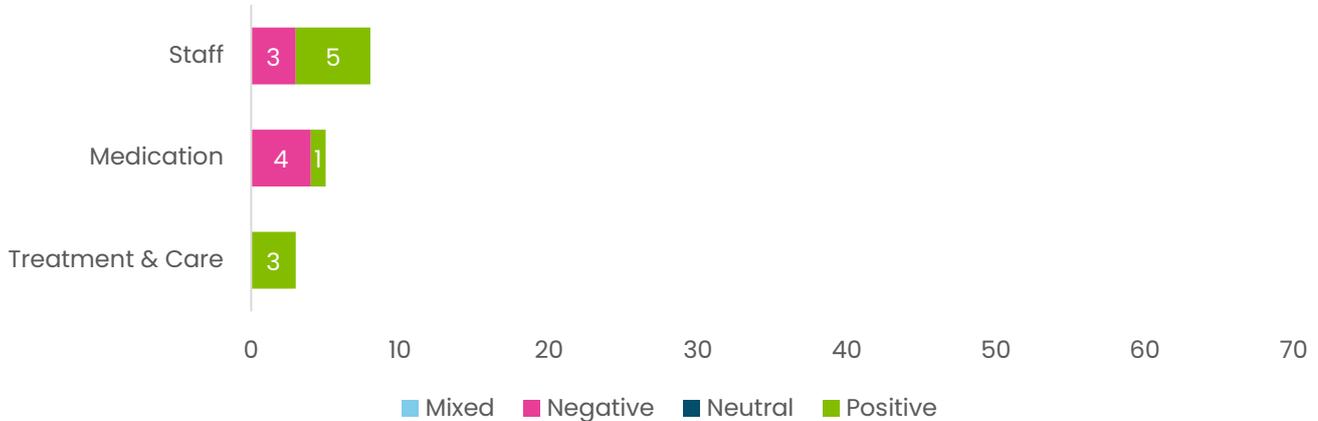
The most common themes in relation to Primary Care Services were Administration, Staff, and Access to Services. The charts below show the summary of themes and how the public felt about the different Primary Care Services they told us about across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, separated by the type of service, over the past three months:

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

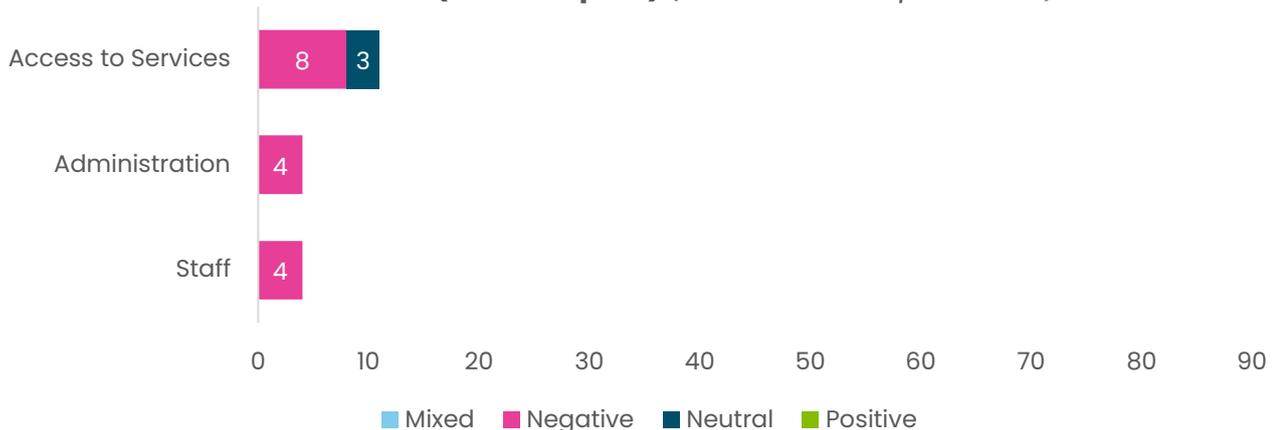
GP Practice (based on 91 experiences)



Pharmacy (based on 10 experiences)



Dentist (non-hospital) (based on 15 experiences)





Feedback about Hospital Services

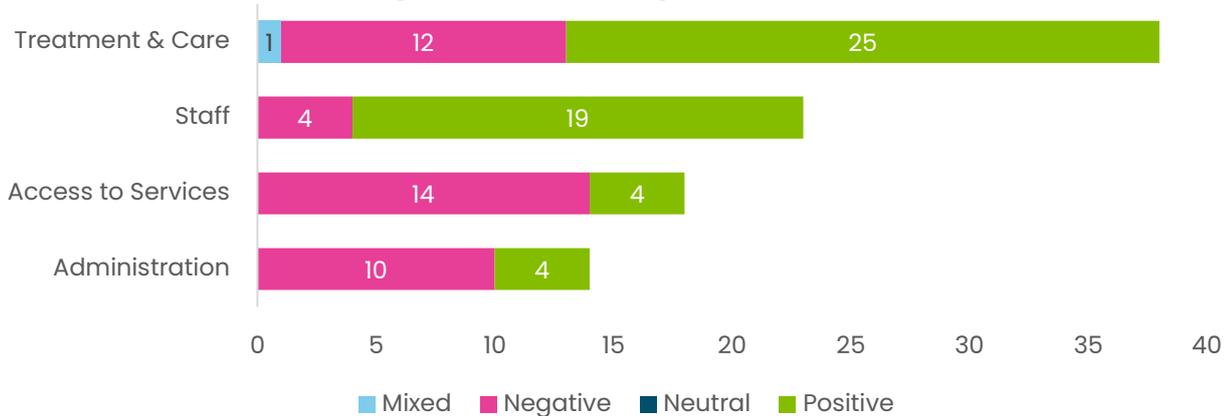
87 experiences (28.8% of overall feedback) were about hospital services. Of those:

- 48 experiences related to hospital services in Devon
- 16 experiences related to hospital services in Plymouth
- 23 experiences related to hospital services in Torbay.

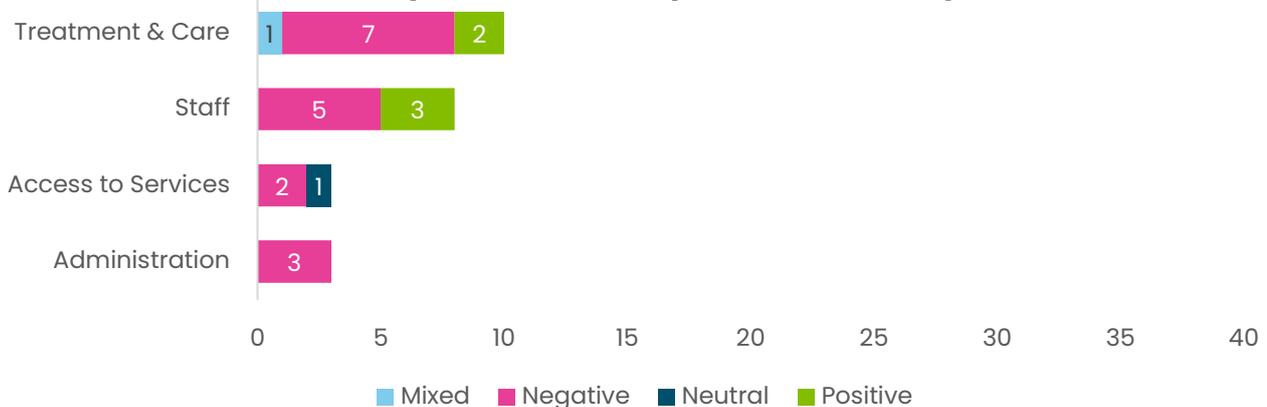
The most common themes overall in relation to Hospital Services were **Treatment & Care, Staff, Access to Services,** and **Administration.**

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:

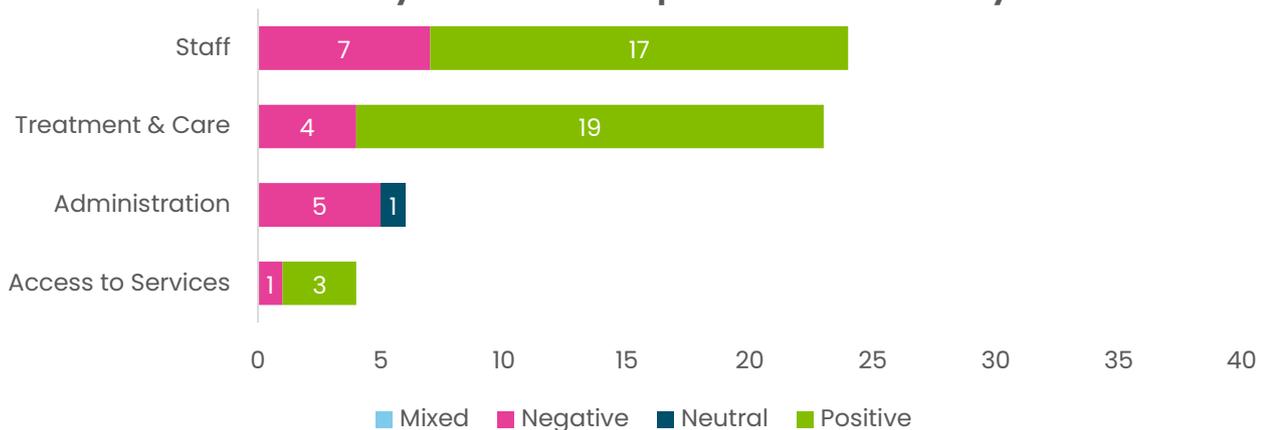
Summary of themes - Hospital Services in Devon



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.

Caroline from North Devon contacted us looking for mental health support to go out as she struggles to do this independently. She told us she is finding her mental health and anxiety challenging at present and wants someone to talk to.



What we did – We discussed the support available and ensured that Caroline was making use of the existing support services available such as the Mental Health team or counselling. She said she would like some sort of support friend as she struggles to go out alone, so we suggested the Reaching for Independence Team and made a referral to them on her behalf (with her permission).

What difference did it make?

Caroline was happy for us to contact on her behalf and is currently receiving the support she needs.



Martin lives near Plymouth and came to Healthwatch for support unable to book a COVID vaccination as he doesn't have the means to access the internet and was told by both his GP Surgery and his local chemist that the only way to book an appointment was online.

What we did – With Martin's permission to share his details over the phone we were able to book a vaccination appointment online at a local vaccination centre.

What difference did it make?

Martin needed to book a COVID vaccination ahead of a planned holiday and would have been unable to if we had not booked him an appointment at a local vaccination centre.

Debra in Torbay contacted us to explain that she has a lot of problems regarding her hips and knees but that her medication for pain relief had suddenly been reduced by her GP Practice. She told us she is struggling to move around, is unable to cook for herself, or clean her home and that this reduction in medication has affected her both physically and mentally.



What we did – We contacted the Practice Manager who ensured Debra was contacted a few days later and that arrangements for a medication review with the pharmacist were made.

What difference did it make?

Debra was happy with this outcome and to be able to discuss her pain relief directly with a health professional.

Impact : We regularly share all of your stories and our intelligence with key stakeholders, including health and social care providers & commissioners, the Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board, our local authorities and Local Care Partnerships, and the voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE) sector. We also share our data with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England (HWE) 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

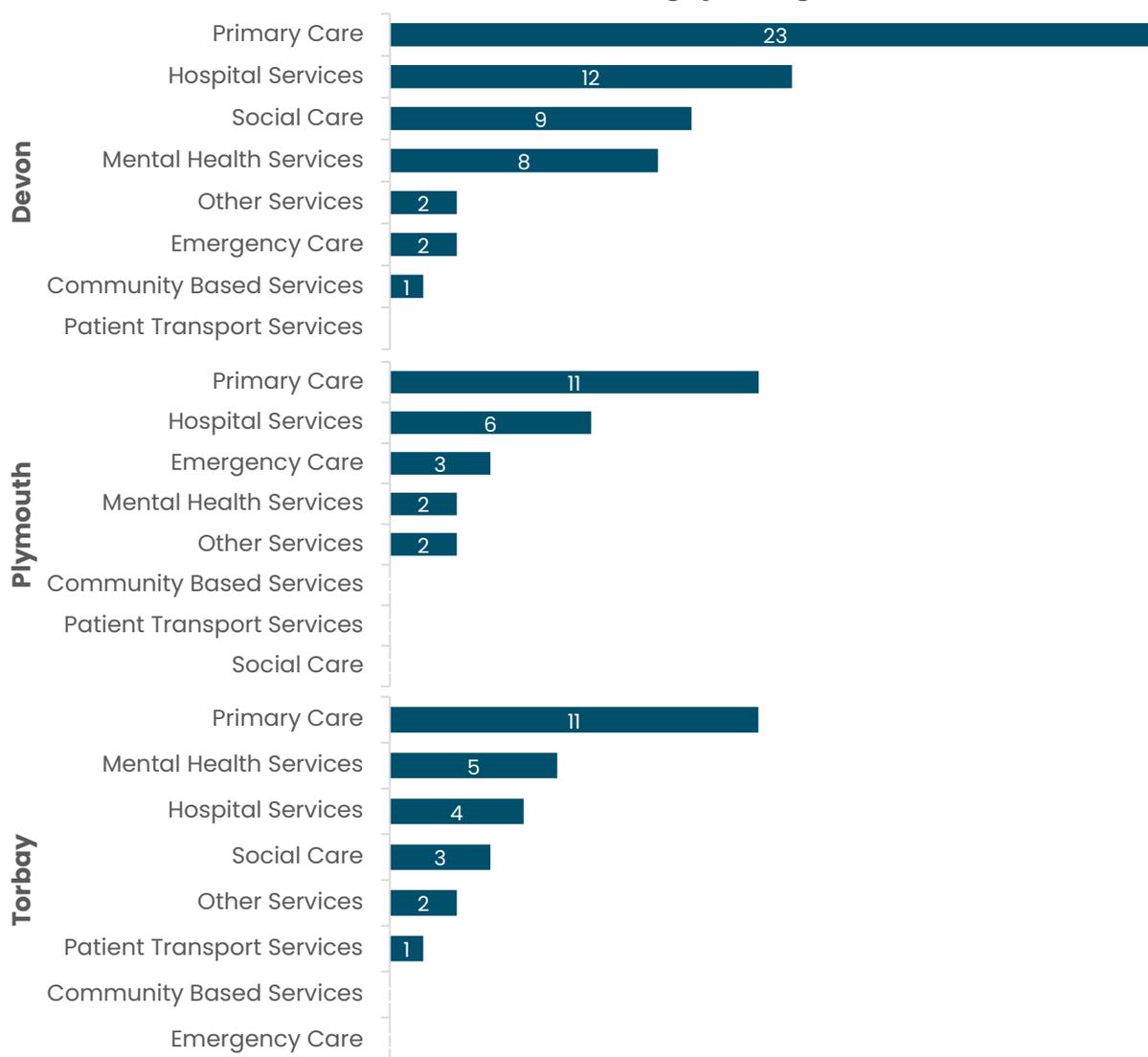
All public feedback we receive is logged in our secure system for further analysis. This includes working with other local organisations to gather feedback such as Citizen’s Advice, Community Trusts and Community Hubs. Some are serious concerns or complaints that need to be escalated further for immediate action. This quarter there have been **108** such cases. Of these:

- 48 were provided with advice and information by the contact centre,
- 23 were referred to a Healthwatch Champion,
- 3 were signposted to PALS,
- 33 were signposted to an advocacy service,
- 1 was escalated as a safeguarding alert.

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, 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 **108** cases originated in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and which type of service they referred to. The total is more than **108** as some cases may be referred to multiple types of service at a time.

NOTE: 1 CASE IS OUT OF AREA RELATING TO PRIMARY CARE.

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:

- **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** – we were asked for feedback by the CQC regarding delays in treatment at Royal Eye Infirmary in Plymouth and feedback on the Rapid Response Secure Care Ambulance service. We provided them with all of your feedback about these services.

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 **5** requests for information related to our priorities to support our work – all were Devon-wide and are detailed in brief below:

- **One Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) – This quarter we made 4 RFIs to NHS Devon:**
 - We requested information about the best way for patients to contact the GP service without having to go through the online consultation process for queries not related to the need for an appointment, such as letter requests or medication questions.
 - We asked about the disparity of GP service provision in rural Devon and whether there were any current challenges or operational issues of concern with regards to the provision of services for people who need to access different GP services.
 - We made an informal enquiry about GP Patient Records regarding communications needs (e.g. spoken/BSL translation), Veterans under the Armed Forces Covenant and whether if someone is a carer it is that flagged on their GP record.
 - Our most recent request is for information regarding our report on the impact of providing unpaid care at home. The report was selected by Healthwatch England to submit to the Commons Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into Adult Social Care Reform. The report recommendations are directly informing local action plans for Carers services, including the new Dementia Strategy for Devon. We requested further information from NHS Devon on who the lead responsible for Carers is and where the monitoring of quality improvement to Carers health and wellbeing sits within their system wide work programme.

Impact: NHS Devon responded to say that the methods for these types of GP requests differ between practices and the best way for patients to clarify the correct method for their query is to review the information on the practice website or call the practice directly.

They confirmed that the GP service provision in rural Devon is appropriate and meets their contractual obligations, however appointments are limited.

Regarding GP Records, they said the three areas raised are all things that can be flagged / read coded on the GP system but are not mandated. They said a lot of work was done during COVID to make sure carers were coded, veterans will be coded and that there are “veteran friendly practices”.

- **Local Pharmaceutical Committee** – We were made aware of a premises location change for a pharmacy in Seaton that did not come through the normal route, and had concerns whether the location was large enough for this service. We also had concerns about non/late payment of rent and staff not being paid on time. We requested information on whether providers tendering for Pharmacy services go through a financial check/accreditation process.

Impact: Local Pharmaceutical Committee responded to say they have arranged a site visit to look at the location and premises to check whether it meets the standards set by the General Pharmaceutical Council. They also explained that although community pharmacy contractors do not have to tender for pharmaceutical services, every pharmacy has a “contract” with the NHS to provide them and new owners have to submit Fitness to Practice paperwork. They told us there is currently no financial check process of new applicants however they are proposing a checklist to be implemented locally to support new pharmacy set ups which will include some financial due diligence.



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

- Libraries across Newton Abbot, Exeter and Barnstaple.
- Barnstaple and Exeter Hospital Drop Ins.
- Honiton Library & Foodbank
- Exeter University & Exeter College.
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events in Barnstaple and Exeter.

healthwatch Plymouth

- Community drop ins at Wellbeing Hub & Barnardo’s family hub.
- University of Plymouth School of Nursing.
- St Budeaux & Barne Barton Library
- Care Home Lay Visiting across Plymouth.
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events in Plymouth and Ivybridge.

healthwatch Torbay

- Torbay Hospital Drop Ins.
- Drop in sessions at Paignton Community Hub & Paignton Library.
- Torbay Council Roadshow
- Diabetes UK – kitchen project.
- NHS 10 Year Plan engagement events in Paignton.

Other Healthwatch Reports or Campaigns Coming Soon

- Healthwatch England will be releasing three new reports next quarter on eye care, trauma survivors and the healthcare experiences of trans people.
- The entire Healthwatch Network across the country will be taking part in ‘Share For Better Care’ Week at the end of February. The week aims to raise awareness of why feedback matters and encouraging more people to share feedback with services or with Healthwatch.
- We will be sharing a series of video reports of your feedback with NHS Devon as part of the NHS 10 Year Plan engagement campaign and consultation in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
- 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 websites!

Impact : What we do with this report

We publicise this report on our three websites, three email bulletins and various social media channels. We share this report with key stakeholders, including health and social care providers & commissioners, the Devon Integrated Care Partnership Board, our local authorities, Local Care Partnerships and the voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE) sector. We also share this report with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England (HWE) to help address health and care issues at a national level. For more information, please contact Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth or Torbay 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.