

You Told Us

What we heard in July 2024



We listen

Each month we analyse the feedback we receive to get an overview of the most common themes within the health and social care landscape in Lancashire.

This feedback informs our future engagement work and highlights any issues that we may need to escalate directly to a health and social care provider. We encourage people to share their experiences with us, and we offer information and signposting if people need further support or want to make a complaint.



This month we engaged with 363 people



We heard the most about:

GP services

Other services we frequently received feedback about included:

- **Dentists**
- **Hospital services**
- **Maternity Care**



Your experiences:


GP Services

- Many people contacted us about the difficulties they experienced accessing GP services, including long waiting times on the phone.
- Others told us of their frustrations using online appointment services.
- People described mixed experiences of treatment and care. While many were very positive, others reported that they have been unable to access appropriate treatment due to issues relating to accessibility and reasonable adjustments.
- Please contact us for advice if you have any concerns or difficulties accessing GP services in your area.

Can't make appointments on the phone anymore, you just get referred to online services were they say they will get back to you within 3 days but don't.

Dentists

- Difficulty accessing an NHS dentist continues to be a problem in Lancashire, as it is across England.
- Many people have contacted us asking for advice on finding an NHS dentist for themselves and family members, including babies and young children.
- Some people have told us that they are struggling to pay expensive dentistry fees.
- This is a national problem, and we will continue to monitor the situation in Lancashire.

 *I've got a one-year-old baby and I'm struggling to find an NHS place at any local dentist for her. I feel like I've been being sent from pillar to post the past month. Please could you guide me in the right direction or help me find one? I'm concerned she still hasn't seen a dentist now, but not sure what to do when no one is taking NHS patients even for babies!*



Your experiences:

Hospital services

- This month we heard many positive experiences of hospital care in Lancashire, including excellent treatment in virtual wards.
- However, many people spoke to us with concerns about waiting times, poor communication, and having to travel long distances to attend appointments.
- Difficulty accessing parking spaces, and having to pay parking fees at some hospitals, also continues to be a common grievance.

I had an appointment with the x-ray department, and it was an evening appointment which was good for me outside of work hours. I was in and out within 10 minutes, I couldn't believe it, and I didn't have to pay for parking which was an added bonus.

Maternity Care

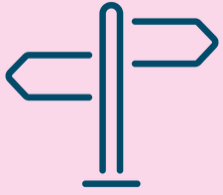
- We received several pieces of feedback regarding care in maternity wards.
- While people were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of medical care they received, we heard that midwives are often so overworked that pastoral care was sometimes poor.
- Two people told us that the maternity wards at Royal Lancaster Infirmary were too hot – we will pass this feedback forward to the hospital.



The staff were all so lovely and helpful throughout our extended stay at the maternity ward in Lancaster, but the unit and bedroom we were in were way too hot.



Our actions were:



50

People were signposted to the right place to get further assistance and help

We are frequently contacted by people asking for advice on accessing NHS dentistry services. This month we have signposted many people to call the Lancashire Dental Helpline number on **0300 1234 010**. Difficulty accessing an NHS dentist is a national problem, and has been on our radar for some time. We are currently preparing to add a space on our website which will provide more information on this issue.

Access to GP services remains the most frequent concern we receive. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely. We are proactively conducting Enter and View visits in GP surgeries in order to highlight good practice and identify areas which require improvement.

As we are still hearing a high volume of feedback about hospital services, we will continue to work with our partners at local hospital trusts across Lancashire through visits, place assessments and popups to make sure your feedback is being heard and acted upon.

The Healthwatch Lancashire team are available to talk between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. We're here to listen to your views and experiences, and we can help you find the health and care services you are looking for.

There are multiple ways you can share your feedback with us. If you have an inquiry, or want to share your general experiences, you can call the office on **01524 239100**.

If you would like to leave feedback about a specific service, such as your GP Practice, care home or hospital the best place to do this is on our independent Feedback Centre at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk