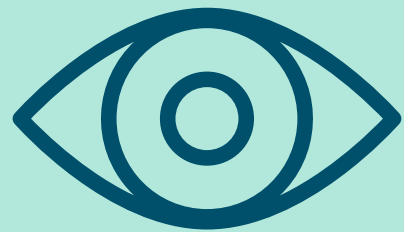


# Insight



The public's health and  
social care views

**July to September 2024**

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# Introduction

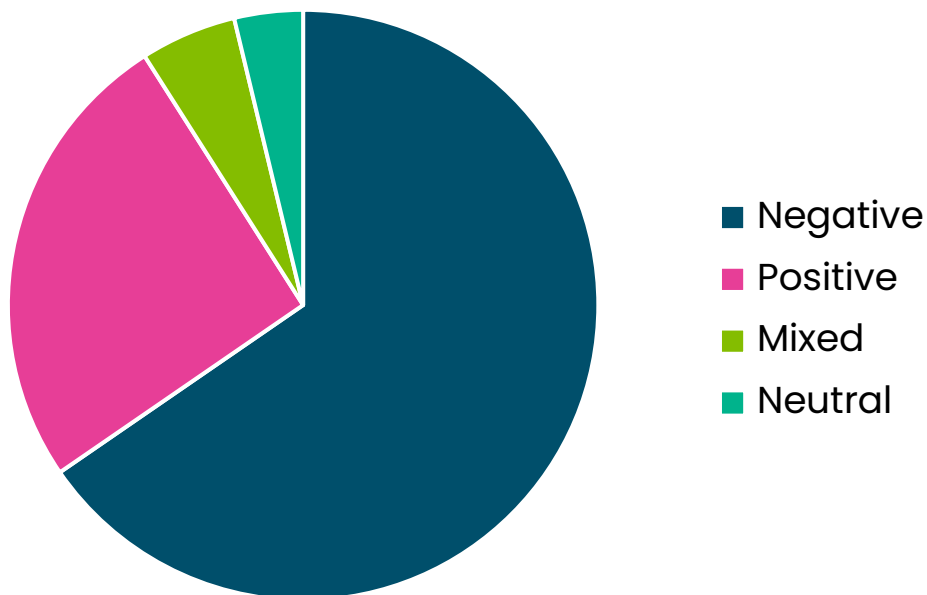
**Healthwatch North Yorkshire, the independent champion for people who use NHS and social care services, are listening to what people like about the care they receive, what works well and what they think could be improved.**

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 July to September. We received feedback from 139 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).

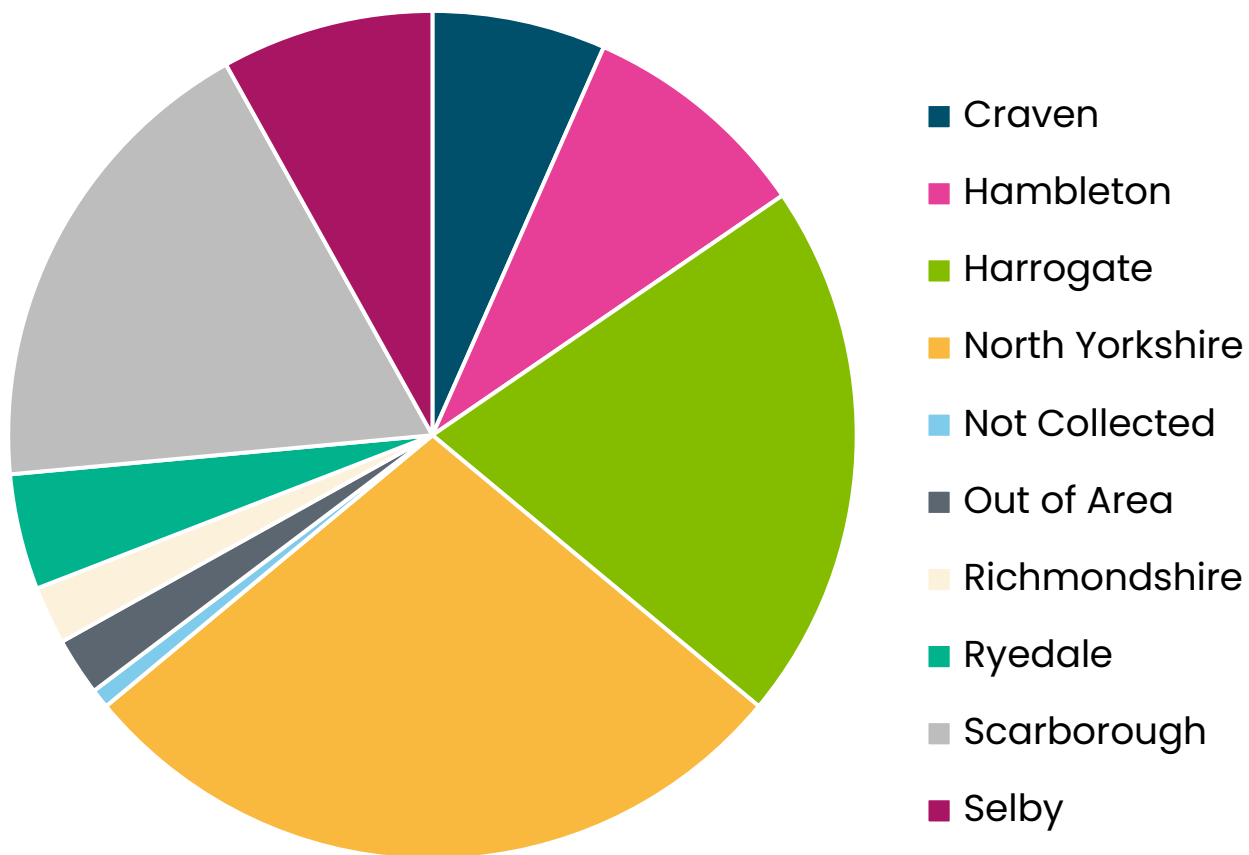
**63% of the feedback was negative, 25% positive and the remaining feedback was mixed or neutral.**

### Sentiment of feedback



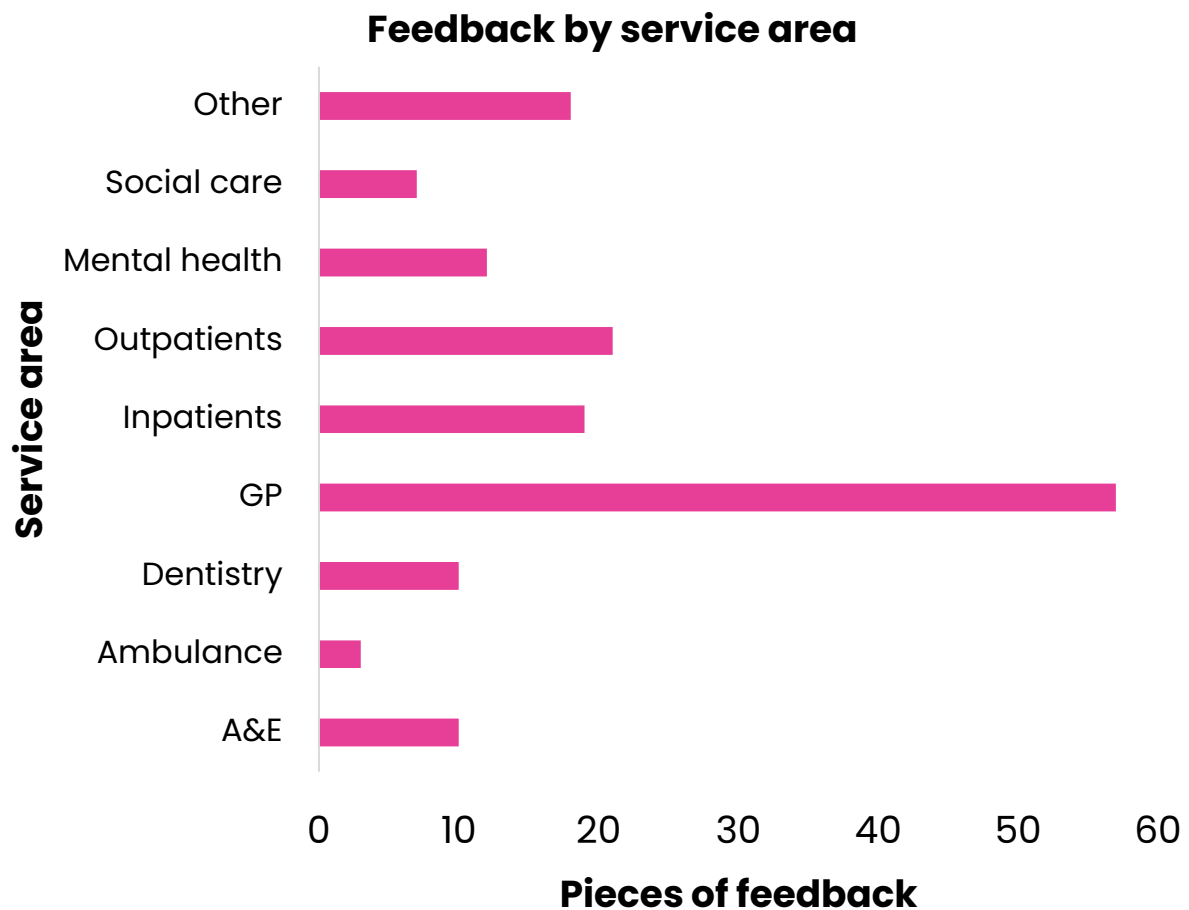
There was a spread of feedback from across the different districts of North Yorkshire, as shown below.

### Feedback by district



# Feedback by service area

We received the most feedback about GP services (41%), followed by hospital care (28%)<sup>1</sup>, mental health services (8%)



<sup>1</sup> Hospital care includes outpatient appointments, inpatient care and accident and emergency.

# Feedback about GP services

## What the public told us

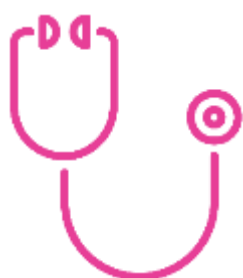


**Around 53% of the feedback about GP services was negative, 39% positive and 8% mixed or neutral.**

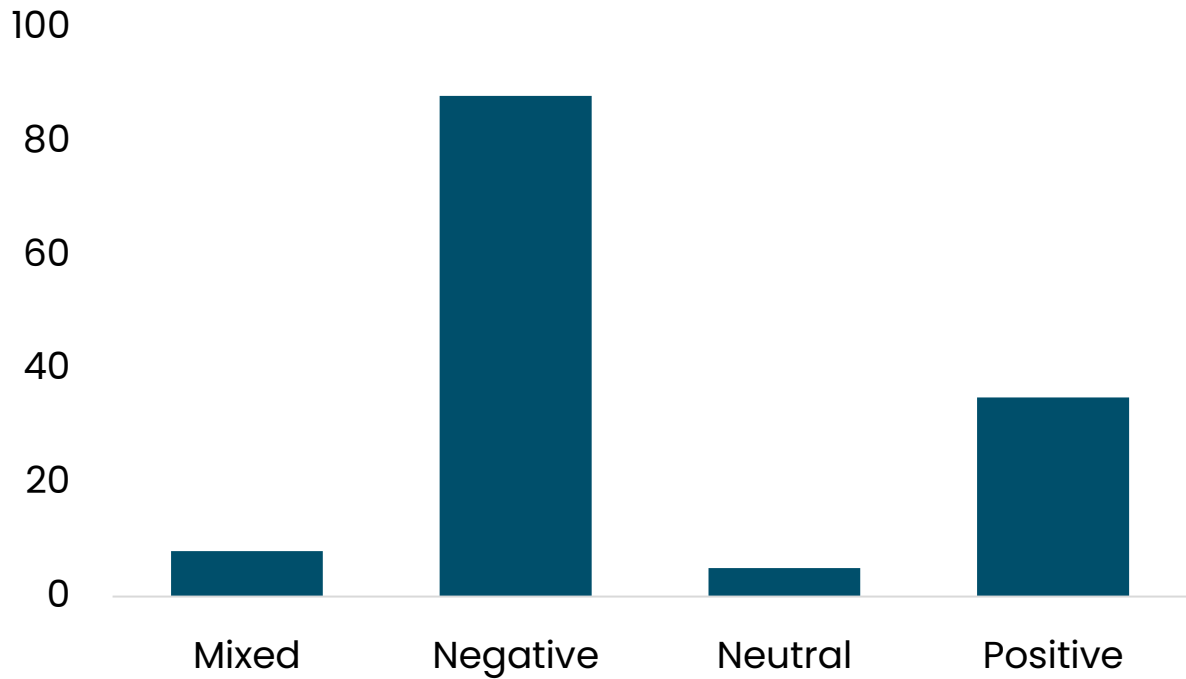
The main feedback centred around care, kindness, respect and dignity, with 63% of this feedback being positively focussed on the compassion they received from healthcare professionals. The 20% of negative feedback in this area centred around the lack of support from healthcare professionals when dealing with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

The remaining comments highlighted that whilst some healthcare professionals were caring and kind, others were not.

Additionally, one of the key issues identified was the lack of easy access to GP's and the long waiting times to get through on the phone.



## Sentiment of GP feedback



We received feedback about 33 different GP practices across North Yorkshire. The practices that received the most feedback are explored in more detail on the next pages.



## Derwent Practice, Malton

**There were five people who shared feedback about this practice, two of which were negative, one positive and the remaining, mixed.**

- One person mentioned that getting through to a doctor was extremely difficult when receptionists are unaware of the seriousness of certain conditions. However, once getting through, the doctor's are extremely helpful.
- Two people mentioned the lack of communication between the doctors at the surgery and York Hospital as when hospital records are updated, this is not picked up by the surgery: resulting in outdated medication being prescribed.
- One patient mentioned that not only are the phones answered in a very timely manner, but the GPs are also extremely professional and friendly.
- One patient raised the concern over the blood test service being scrapped as of September 2024, stating that she now faces a 30-mile round trip to attend her regularly required blood tests.

"The phone was answered in 30 seconds. I got an appointment the next working day. **A friendly and professional GP sorted me out no problem.** You should be very proud of the whole team providing such a good service in the current climate of the NHS and especially primary care!"



"I am not impressed with the poor and slow service from the GP and worried that people without others to help might **be taking the wrong medication without realising.**"

"I understand the funding issue - in addition to the **systematic underfunding of the NHS in general in recent years**, much of the funding that is available has been diverted into hospitals and away from primary care, leaving GPs in a mess. The situation needs sorting quickly as patients will be harmed by this."

## **Spa Surgery, Harrogate**

**There were 5 pieces of feedback received about this practice. Four were positive and one negative.**

- Multiple people commented on the clear use of teamwork within the surgery. From the receptionists all the way to the senior doctors, it is a very well-organised establishment.
- Multiple people also commented on the quick and efficient E-Consult service, stating that they received a reply in a very timely manner with an appointment immediately booked if required.
- One person commented on the high levels of training all team members seem to have, from the pharmacy attached to it, to the trainee GPs.
- The one negative comment mentioned the long wait times when waiting to get through on the phone. Adding that if you chose the call back option, you almost never get a call back.

“The pharmacist was very helpful and directed me to the GP surgery. The care navigators were supportive and found me a suitable appointment. I visited the GP and her student GP who were very empathetic, and they did a careful examination explaining the issues and treatment. **I am very grateful to you all. Thank you.**”

“**The impression was one of teamwork.** Full marks to Spa Surgery.”

## **Beech Tree Surgery, Selby**

**There were four people who shared their views on this practice. Three pieces were positive and one negative.**

- Multiple people commented on the efficiency of the online consultation system. Noting that when it is used, it usually gets a response to the patient within the hour with a conclusion.
- One person noted that when being referred to specialist clinics, the waiting lists have been over 50-weeks long.

“Fantastic service from the receptionist which led to my enquiry being dealt with efficiently, quickly and with a satisfactory result. **Very kind and helpful when I needed it.**”

“I was referred for musculoskeletal assessment in February. Not seen until July 2024. The first physio appointment was in late September. That's 7 months! I was referred in July by musculoskeletal to the pain clinic. **It's a 50-week waiting list. It is absolutely appalling!**”

## **Fisher Medical Centre, Skipton**

**There were 4 pieces of feedback about this practice. Two pieces were negative and two were positive.**

- One person gave negative feedback regarding the long wait times for a simple discussion about their results, stating that their online consultation answers were lost from the database on multiple occasions and that it is a nightmare to get through on the phone.
- Two people gave feedback about the friendliness of the staff and their professionalism allowed for a very helpful and compassionate experience.

“My appointment was made quickly today. Reception staff were **polite and so helpful**. The doctor I saw was wonderful. Caring and thorough. Much appreciated.”

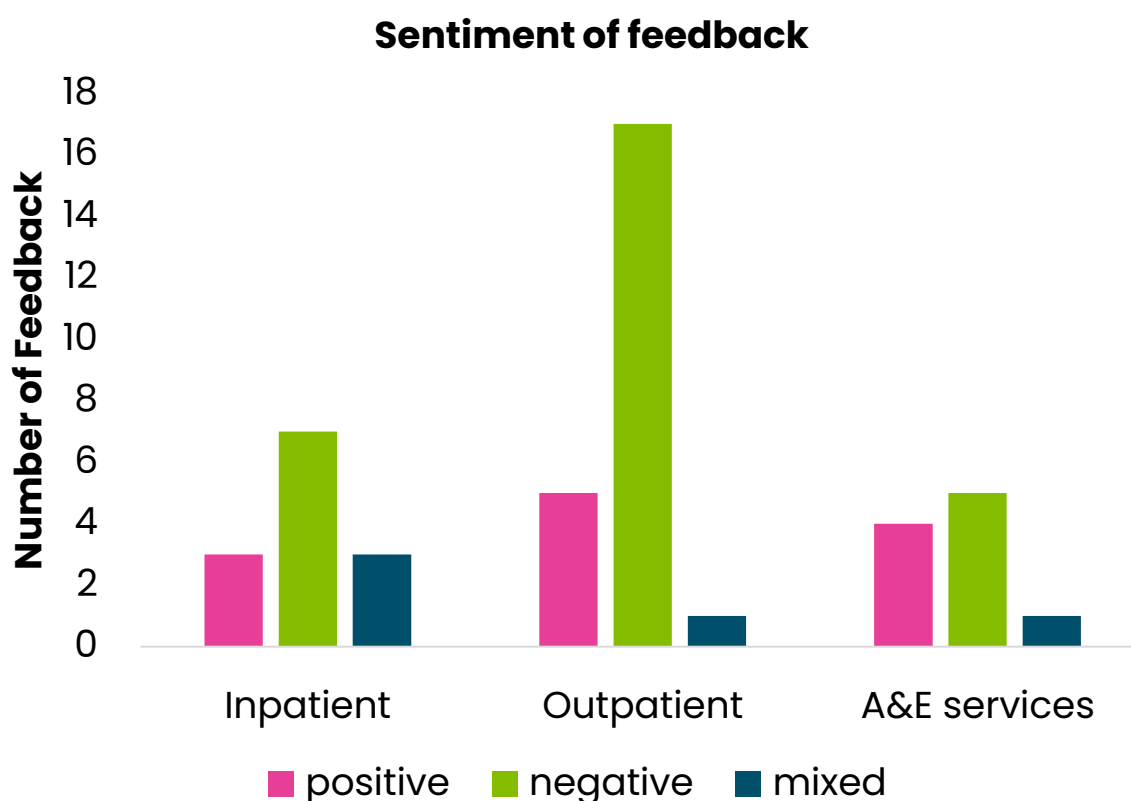
“I'm so tired and upset from waiting that I don't know what to say. I have been waiting over a month to discuss test results needing a change of medication. Potentially serious. I feel sad and despairing because I feel I don't know how to get health care. **When people feel ill or tired, they can't cope with this system.**”

# Feedback about hospital care

**Around 27% of feedback about hospital care was positive, 63% negative and 10% mixed or neutral.**

**High praise for hospital staff was a re-occurring theme in the feedback, often stating that the staff were caring, kind and compassionate.**

A lot of feedback praised the quality of treatment that they received in the hospitals. On the other hand, negative feedback had re-occurring themes around the lack of communication between hospital staff both internally and between the trust and GPs. Issues with hospital transport and long waiting times were also raised.



## Harrogate Hospital

**There were 12 people who shared their views on Harrogate Hospital, with three of these being positive and nine pieces being negative.**

- The positive pieces of feedback focussed on the great attitudes of the doctors and nurses in the hospital, who were very respectful and compassionate, despite what situation the patients were in.
- Multiple people gave negative feedback regarding the aftercare provided by staff. Once a diagnosis had been given in hospital, there was often very little advice on how to live with various diagnosis' or where to go for support.
- A re-occurring theme was the long wait-times in Harrogate Hospital, stating that administration staff often did not recognise urgency of certain situations.
- One patient who is autistic mentioned that he felt unwelcome by all the staff he met in the accident & emergency waiting room. The lack of compassion resulted in him leaving after a two hour wait due to high levels of physical and emotional discomfort.

“I was treated by an excellent Doctor who diagnosed my condition and looked after me until I was admitted to a ward. **All the staff that evening, despite being very busy looked after me with great care & skill and I am very grateful to them.**”

“I was discharged after ten hours in accident & emergency, dressed in a hospital night dress and a hospital blanket in a taxi I had to pay for myself. Staff knew I was sole carer for 96-year-old frail Mother. I was offered no advice or help or any offer of

care for myself. **The pain was horrendous, no advice was given as to how to care for myself as to after care”.**

“The nurse who patched up my broken toe was a really nice man helped me and was so joyful he is a gem, **many thanks to everyone and him specially made jokes and after a long wait** of me being tired and annoyed he soon turned it around”.

## **Scarborough Hospital**

**There were 10 people shared their views on Scarborough Hospital. Three were positive, five negative and two mixed.**

- One person mentioned the lack of communication between staff in the hospital as his wife received two different diagnoses from two different doctors, resulting in this being a very confusing time for them. Additionally, no reasonable adjustments were made when they eventually discharged her to a home where there was no one physically able to care for her as required.
- People mentioned the lack of urgency when given a diagnosis. One person noted that in 2011, a cyst on their brain showed up in a scan that was not mentioned until recently, when the patient since found out that the cyst had developed so greatly that it now affects their brain function.
- People mentioned in the positive feedback about how quick and efficient the accident and emergency staff were at sending the patient to the correct ward as soon as a diagnosis was reached.

“I visited Scarborough General Hospital this week at their accident & emergency department. From arrival to discharge my care was outstanding. I was transferred almost immediately to their urgent care unit where I spent the day. **Each staff member who I saw or even just spoke to briefly, was friendly, warm and so caring.** I was listened to and treated with respect and compassion. I couldn't fault my experience at all. **Well done all staff – you are wonderful, and thank you, everyone.**”

“**I waited two hours for ambulance then cancelled and got someone to take me.** However, once there, support was easily accessible, and experience of care was good.”

## York Hospital

**There were 10 pieces of feedback about York Hospital. Six were negative, three were positive and one was mixed.**

- Multiple people gave feedback on the long wait-times in accident & emergency as well as the long wait times for specialist appointments, the average wait time being anything between 7 and 50 weeks. Additionally, if there is a replacement of doctors, it has been mentioned that the patients are then pushed to the bottom of the wait list once again.
- The three pieces of positive feedback centred around both the high quality of treatment that they received in hospital as well as the compassion and kindness that all of the staff showed, from the reception staff to the doctors and nurses.

“From the moment of admission, I was shown so much care and compassion and always accompanied with a smile, that I began my recovery swiftly. **The professional standards were**

**never dropped, I was diagnosed well and clearly,** and I returned home after a week much improved with so much to be thankful for. Teamwork manifests itself in every section of the ward, from the doctors to the dinner ladies. Food was good too. Smiles are worth a thousand words in this situation and that was what lifted me most of all.”

“I live in Scarborough. Many health services and outpatient appointments are only available in York. To visit York on the train cost about £23 return plus extra for a local bus to get to the hospital. **I think this is prohibitively expensive for many patients needing health care.**”

## **James Cook Hospital**

**There were five people who shared their views about James Cook Hospital, all of which were negative.**

- Feedback focused on hospital access, noting long travel times for brief appointments.
- Many raised concerns about the lack of patient transport, especially for the elderly, who often depend on friends or family to get to the hospital.
- One person mentioned that the weight loss services that are offered by the hospital are very ill-informed, as they just consist of being handed leaflets with online websites on how they can find helpful information.

“A complete waste of time and money. There was no weight loss service, I went to 2 lectures and that was it a handout of internet



sites and diet sites was all it offered. **I was left totally disillusioned; I expected some type of support and guidance."**

"It takes all day to get to James Cook Hospital now I can't drive. I leave at 9am and don't get home until 4pm just for a ten-minute appointment. I went recently for a bone density scan took hours to get there and was only in 5 minutes. **Why can't they offer more outpatients and diagnostic appointments locally?"**

## **Friarage Hospital**

**There were four people who shared their views about the Friarage Hospital, two were negative, one positive and one mixed.**

- One piece of feedback highlighted the lack of accessible patient transport to the hospital. When patients can make their own way to the hospital, the parking is a nightmare and travel time can take hours. This can be incredibly frustrating when the appointment itself only takes 10/15 minutes.
- A positive piece of feedback was shared about the options that the staff give patients on which hospital they would prefer to have their appointment in. This makes it much easier for patients to choose hospital appointments closer to them.
- A negative piece of feedback was shared about the eye clinic at Friarage Hospital, stating that the clinic does not answer their phones. This resulted in the patient having to go into the hospital just to change an appointment time.
- The mixed piece of feedback spoke negatively about their experience in Specsavers due to lack of professional

knowledge and experience. However, they stated that once they were in the Friarage Hospital, the eye care was of a high standard with compassionate staff.

“Hospitals do not realise how difficult and expensive it can be travelling for appointments particularly in rural areas where no useful public transport. **Parking is a nightmare.** Appointments may only last 5 or 10 minutes but take hours to get there.”

“I went to Specsavers for an eye test who confirmed I had an optic lump on my eye but did nothing about it. A short time after my vision was distorted and had wavy lines. I visited another optician who said I should have been referred to the hospital for treatment as it had leaked. I feel the first optician was young and very inexperienced to deal with it. I have now been referred to Friarage Hospital for regular injections in my eye and **the staff were amazing, kind and considerate as I was very frightened.**”



# Feedback about mental health

**There were eleven pieces of feedback around support, ten of them being negative and one of them being mixed.**

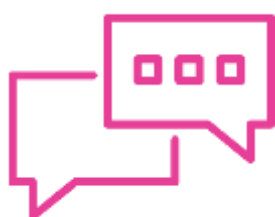
- Most feedback focused on the long waiting lists for mental health support after GP referrals. Many noted that once they see a psychologist, the experience feels demeaning, with repeated techniques that yield no new results.
- One person noted that while clinical support is available for those with mental health issues, there is no guidance for friends and family on how to help outside of therapy
- Several people shared that long waiting times for mental health support led them to seek alternatives, only to be denied help because they were already on a waiting list
- One piece of mixed feedback mentioned that they felt that the short-term mental health support was great but there was nothing in terms of long-term mental health support.

“There is no support for families with autistic children. My child has challenging behavior, and we are just passed from pillow to post, ongoing for over two years with no help or improvement.

**We are at breaking point.”**

“I have nothing positive to say. The government needs to grant the public inquiry into Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS

Foundation Trust before more lives are lost. **Too many have been lost already.”**



# Feedback about dentistry

**There were eight pieces of feedback about dentists, six of them negative, one of them positive and one neutral.**

- All pieces of feedback centred around the difficulty in being able to access an NHS dentist in North Yorkshire. One piece of feedback mentioned that despite contacting over 80 dentists in their local area, none of them were able to give them an NHS appointment. However, if they wanted to pay private, they could get access to a dentist immediately. It was fed-back that people cannot afford to go private. As a result, people are having to ignore issues that arise with their dental health, ultimately leading to worse overall health.
- One person gave feedback stating that she was waiting for an NHS dentist for so long that her health issues got significantly worse. She saved up for over two years just to be able to afford basic treatment, resulting in her struggling to pay for her food and bills due to making this sacrifice.
- The one piece of positive feedback mentioned that they have recently moved to North Yorkshire but since there are no NHS dentists in North Yorkshire, they have kept their dentist in South Yorkshire.



# Other feedback

## Weight management services

**There were four pieces of weight management feedback, all of which were negative.**

- Multiple pieces of feedback mentioned that the weight management services in North Yorkshire do not take people's disability into account. Instead, they gave generic diet and exercise advice that did not cater to individual needs.
- Others commented on the talks lacking valuable information and had too many people in the room at one time. This resulted in a lack of individual help and their health worsening.
- One person mentioned the lack of accessibility as a full-time working individual as the sessions were only held during work hours. Resulting in the individual quitting the sessions very early on.



## 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.**

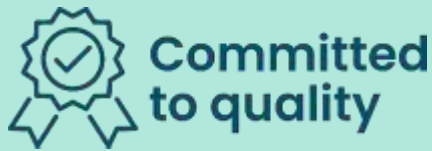
However, when people do receive treatment and support, they are often positive about the care they have received and tend to be appreciative of the caring and hard-working staff.

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 October to December 2024.

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



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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