

Quick Poll Survey: Your views about Pharmacies

Introduction

Healthwatch Lincolnshire wanted to hear about consumers' experiences of using their pharmacies for health advice and getting prescriptions, with the information to be used to inform those who plan and pay for NHS services to help improve the services they deliver. We decided to conduct a survey to gather more data and gain a wider understanding of people's opinions and experiences whilst using their pharmacy. We were especially keen to hear about the impact Coronavirus pandemic had on accessing pharmacy services and how services could be improved.

Aim

To allow local people to quickly share their experiences and opinions of using their pharmacy for health advice and getting prescriptions.

Methodology

We heard from 210 people via an online survey during July to September 2021.

We heard from

210

people

Findings

Who took part:

7%	Boston Borough
21%	East Lindsey District
5%	Lincoln City
25%	North Kesteven District
19%	South Holland District
13%	South Kesteven District
8%	West Lindsey District
2%	Out of area



Services provided

90% of respondents visited their pharmacy primarily to collect prescriptions. Over the counter purchases accounted for 5% of customers and 3% visited for minor ailment advice. Only 1% attended to receive a flu jab.

Accessibility

Over 60% of respondents found their pharmacy very easy to access however, there were several shared issues for those who struggled to access their pharmacy. Lack of public or private transport made getting to local pharmacies difficult, issues with opening times; not being open at the weekends or being closed during the week due to no pharmacist was a common problem. Specifically due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the social distancing rules many complained of having to queue outside their pharmacy for long periods of time.

“Only allowing one person in at a time meant waiting outside in all weathers for up to 45 minutes.”

“No longer open at the weekend which is difficult when you work full-time.”

“It is often closed due to no pharmacist.”

Confidentiality

78% of respondents felt they could ask for confidential advice whilst visiting their pharmacy. However, for those who could not, a lack of a private space to do so was a prevalent issue.

“The shop area is very open. I would not feel comfortable asking confidential questions here.”

Waiting times

When asked how satisfied with the time it took to provide the service required participants responded as follows:

63%	Fully satisfied
13%	Fairly satisfied
5%	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
11%	Not very satisfied
8%	Not at all satisfied

Lack of staff and stock were the two biggest factors impacting on waiting times.

“It used to take 3 working days to get prescriptions once issued by a GP. It now takes 5 working days, which in effect makes 7 days, or longer on bank holiday.”

Overall Rating

After taking everything into account (the staff, environment and service provided) individuals rated their pharmacies as followed:

48%	Excellent
22%	Very good
12%	Good
14%	Poor
4%	Very poor



82% rated their pharmacy positively



Summary

It was pleasing to see the vast positivity around patients experiences of pharmacy services in Lincolnshire. Whilst many were pleased with the services provided by their local pharmacy several suggestions were made on how services could be improved even further.

- Improving opening hours during the week and reintroducing opening on the weekend was a common suggestion.
- Furthermore, respondents wished to be able to receive their COVID booster and flu vaccines at their local pharmacy.
- Finally, many wanted the provision of more information on weight management.

It was also clear from these results that Pharmacies are underutilized with the vast amount of people only using them to pick up their prescriptions. More could be done to promote and encourage the use of other services pharmacies have to offer such as medication reviews, cholesterol and blood pressures checks and free health checks and advice.

Confidentiality was an issue for some people which may also be why they don't want to speak up about these additional services. Pharmacies can be constrained to the physical space they have on offer which makes confidentially difficult but it must be made clear that patients can speak confidentially if needed.

Share your thoughts

You can help make health and care services better by sharing your experiences and ideas.

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