

Monthly Report

April 2022

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New to the report:

We are now able to map the location of comments made to us by using the postcodes of services. The map points are coloured according to the sentiment of the comment:

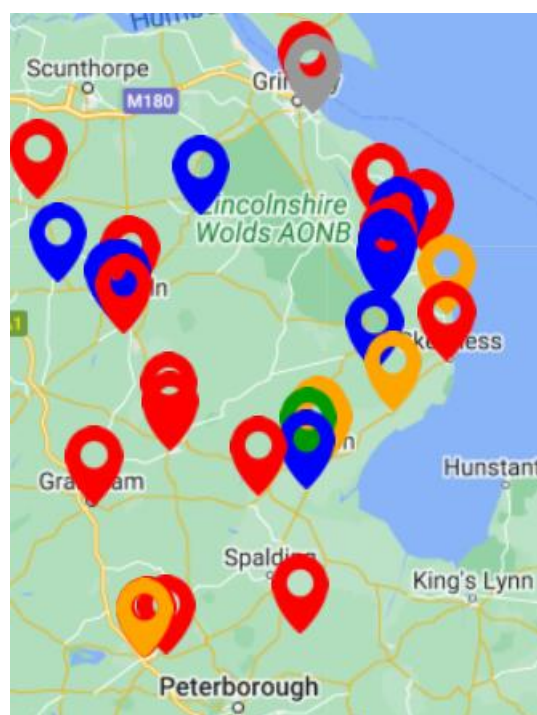
Positive - green

Negative - red

Mixed - orange

Neutral - blue

Unclear - grey



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Overview

April 2022 Monthly Report

During April 2022 Healthwatch Lincolnshire received **94** patient experiences directly to our Information Signposting Officer. This is a summary of the key themes raised by patients, carers and service users during April 2022 about services in Lincolnshire.

For more details you can call us on **01205 820892**
Email: info@healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk



Overall Sentiment

14% of all comments were **positive**
56% of all comments were **negative**

14% of all comments were **neutral**
13% of all comments were **mixed**

April 2022 – Feedback Service Themes Sentiment



22%

Hospital Services
(All services)



38%

GP Services



15%

Community Health
Services



6%

Accident &
Emergency



1%

Diagnosis &
Screening Services
(GP)



20%

Dentistry



60%

Mental Health &
Learning
Disabilities



5%

Social Care

%s total greater than 100% as many comments we receive contain multiple service themes

Services for those with Autism and Learning Disabilities

Over the past few months 49 individuals from the Autism and Learning Disabilities community shared their experiences of health and social care services in Lincolnshire over the past 18 months.

Key Themes

- Praise for services
- Difficulties accessing services and support
- Lack of understanding of autism and learning disabilities



What you told us

When examining the responses, key themes and trends about what made an experience good or bad, regardless of the specific service, became apparent. Good experiences involved practitioners being kind, patient and understanding. Allowing individuals to ask questions and explaining things in an accessible way were other key points.



Your experiences



"Grantham Hospital has always been brilliant with my autistic children. From the paediatrics appointments to the reasonable adjustments made when we have had to visit A&E/Urgent care. They let me (parent) stay with them, even during COVID and listened to me as their carer and parent."

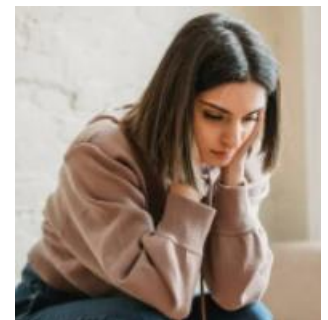
"The dentist knows that I get scared but keeps me calm."

"I had my annual health check at the surgery. The doctor was really good even when they took bloods from me as they know I am a bit scared about needles. They asked me questions and distracted me so I didn't see the needle."



Others sadly have not had such positive experiences.

Individuals repeatedly stated their frustration with practitioners' poor knowledge and understanding of autism and learning disabilities. Some practitioners showed patients little understanding and were rude and dismissive. This coupled with the general lack of services and support for individuals with autism and learning disabilities, had led to individuals having to rely on themselves to find out what help is available. Access to autism assessment services was challenging. Additionally, individuals were concerned around the long waiting times for support and subsequently disappointed when the support offered was just information, which they had often already found themselves.



Support was reported to be particularly poor from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, with individuals either not being eligible or having to wait a long time for support, for it then to only be unhelpful due to the support being basic and generic.

Individuals also highlighted the poor transition between children to adult services, with individuals getting lost in the system and being left without support. Furthermore, the support for adults was drastically reduced from what they received when classed as a child.

Your experiences



“Child now 5 years old, diagnosed when 3 years old with autism which was great, but every step took ages when autism was clear by 14 months! Follow up appointments requested by doc for 3 months would be 6-9, clinics were often cancelled at short notice (pre COVID). After diagnosis it was a case of you've got your diagnosis now off you go. One sheet of paper suggested a charity to turn to for help/advice. Child also has learning disabilities and Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) plus lots physical health problems. Consultant very pleasant and understands better care/support needed but can't offer it. Nurses in children's clinics in Lincoln and Pilgrim Hospitals are lovely but not enough of them, they are always in such a rush to sort patients they apologise for not having the time some families need or being able to signpost you to the help you need.”

“My child with Down Syndrome and multiple health issues has been waiting since 2018 for surgery deemed urgent. I chased this up again in December 2021 and was promised it would be looked into. Almost 3 months on we still have heard nothing.”

“They were very swift to get in touch, with mentions of support for my child and also for me as their parent. However, what they received were general ‘Mental Health First Aid’, which wasn't helpful at all. It was delivered by different people each week so there was no continuity. Pretty much a waste of everyone's time.”

“We initially got a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pretty quickly based on what others have said, however, we challenged for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and this has taken ages. I think the Trust should send text messages or e-mails to a registered address for those on a waiting list saying simply “you are still on such and such waiting list and will receive an appointment as soon as we can.” That would eliminate a lot of the guessing of what is going on and when or if we will even be seen. It is also no good for the community paediatrics team to basically diagnose ASD and then discharge. My child has other issues and likely needs further assistance but basically we were left on our own to do our own research. I'll mention separately, but the school/local authority/etc are darn hard to find out what “help” there is for children (and adults) unless you really make a fuss.”



Dental Services

Key Themes

- Lack of NHS provision
- Lack of NHS treatment – offered private but not affordable for many



What you told us

Sadly, issues with access to NHS dental services in the county continue to persist. This month we heard from individuals who are still struggling to find NHS practices taking on new NHS patients – both adults and children. One individual informed us that without being informed they were moved to their practice's private list and others are continuing to struggle to access NHS dental treatment but continue to be offered private treatment.

To read more about what you've told us about NHS dental services and our recommendations for dental services in the county, check out our dental report [here](#).

Your experiences



"I have been trying to get myself and my child registered with an NHS dentist since moving to the area in September 2020.

Unfortunately, despite numerous phone calls to various practices, I have been unsuccessful. I have contacted NHS customer contact centre, who carried out a search and advised me there was nothing coming up on their system which covers a 30 mile radius and was advised to use NHS 111 for emergencies.

I have been forced to make a private appointment for my child to have a routine check up, but I cannot continue to pay £45 just for a check up. If any work is required, I will not have the funds to pay for this. It is unbelievable to me, that we are being advised to leave children with poor oral health until they are in so much pain they need emergency care. Surely, preventative measures are far more cost effective."



Finding it hard to get a dentist appointment?

Dental practices are recovering from backlogs due to strict hygiene measures to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19 to patients and staff. The situation is improving but we are hearing that Lincolnshire residents without a regular dentist are still finding it difficult to get an appointment. Read our steps below on accessing NHS dentistry.

1 If you have a dentist you usually visit phone them to make an appointment. Appointments will be available according to your individual situation and dental need. Be prepared to wait longer than usual for a routine, non-urgent appointment. You can also take personal steps to maintain healthy teeth.

2 Unlike registering at a GP practice, NHS dental practices are available to everyone to attend a course of treatment regardless of where they live. Visit the NHS Find a Dentist website to search for a dentist in your area. You should also consider widening your search area to where you can travel to.



3 **Is your dental need urgent?** Phone or go online to NHS 111 to check your symptoms and see if you need urgent help. You will be advised if you need to visit your hospital emergency department (A&E) or advised of your nearest NHS dentists providing urgent appointments. The number of urgent appointments available each day is limited. When phoning a dental practice, clearly describe your symptoms, any pain or swelling and the impact it is having on your daily living.

111

4 If you can't find a dentist for urgent treatment, call NHS England's Customer Contact Centre on 0300 311 2233 stating your situation. Keep sharing your experiences with us, positive and negative, the more information we have the more we can help.



What is Healthwatch Lincolnshire doing about this issue? We regularly monitor the access to NHS dentistry in Lincolnshire sharing our findings with dental commissioners to influence positive change.

Ongoing concerns

We continued to hear from individuals who were struggling to access appointments at their local medical practice. Furthermore, there is ongoing frustration and confusion about the lack of coordination and communication between services in regard to the sharing of medical records and referrals. We also heard of isolated cases of poor-quality care, struggles to access social care and follow-up support.

Your experiences



"I've found that trying to get care when there are no doctors open absolutely hopeless. Each time I've rung NHS 111 all they say is go to your nearest A&E. Nothing that I have had to ring them with hasn't been something that needed A&E it needed an Out of Hours Dr, but where I live there's no walk-in centre they closed it down and chemists are shut on Saturday and Sunday in my village.

What we need is a GP surgery open on a Saturday and Sunday. My spouse works away Monday to Friday and can't get to the GP in the week as their job doesn't allow, so they have to take unpaid time off work to see a GP. Again if there were GPs available at weekends then they wouldn't need to take time off work."

"Patient has an ongoing issue with their heart and has been waiting for a cardiology appointment at Lincoln County Hospital. Late April 2022, they attended the A&E Department due to breathlessness and racing heart. Was in attendance from 11am to 4pm and was seen by a locum cardiologist who said that they would refer the patient to the outpatients department. The patient was told to make contact with the secretary the following date for an urgent outpatients appointment. Patient rang the secretary on the Monday as requested to be told that the referral letter had not been sent through and that they would have to wait for the appointment to be sent through. Patient was very concerned and worried about their heart condition. They had been put on beta blockers by the GP but this had caused the breathlessness."

"Patient had made a written complaint to Lincoln Hospital relating to Cardiology, had seen Consultant in clinic in 2021 and was referred in July 21 to Grantham for tests, patient had not heard anything and chased a few times. Had to get their GP surgery to chase for these results, which eventually came in Feb 22. Recommendation that patient be placed on certain medications from these tests. Patient had been waiting 9 months to be on the medication, which the GP nor the patient knew anything about. Patient unhappy with this length of time waiting and made an official complaint mid March via letter, had no acknowledgement or any communications from the complaints department."



Positive stories

It was encouraging to hear some positive experiences of health and care services in our county this month.



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“ After suffering a fall whilst walking my dog late evening of Friday early April I didn't feel it necessary to present to A&E so my spouse cleaned my grazed face and confident that I was ok we went to bed. The following morning, after having a sleepless night, my spouse took me to Pilgrim Hospital A&E to be checked over. I had bumped my head, hurt my left arm, ribs and had severe swelling and bruising to the left side of my face and eye.

The triage team were wonderful and I was seen by the A&E doctor really quickly. Several X-rays revealed that i had fractured my cheek/eye socket, fractured ribs and possibly chipped a tiny bone in my elbow. The doctor arranged an appointment at Lincoln Hospital to see the maxillofacial consultant the following Tuesday, prescribed antibiotics and strong painkillers, asked me to keep my arm strapped up with just minimal movement to exercise and to just rest.

The doctor was so helpful even finding time to assist me in changing into a hospital gown and then back into my outer clothes following the X-rays/examination.

All of the staff were wonderful; doctors, nurses, reception, triage and porters very pleasant and polite. There were even 2 volunteers constantly passing through the waiting area providing water and warm drinks to everyone waiting.

I cannot praise the A&E Department enough for making my tragic and what could have been traumatic visit as smooth, quick and pleasant as possible.”

“I have just visited a GP at East Lindsay Medical Group on Newmarket in Louth. I wanted to say what a lovely experience it was. They were patient and kind and thorough and I didn't leave feeling I'd wasted their time. I hope the and surgery get my feedback. Thank you.”

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