

Monthly Report

August 2022

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Location of comments:

Location data is mapped using postcodes of services. The map points are coloured according to the sentiment of the comment:

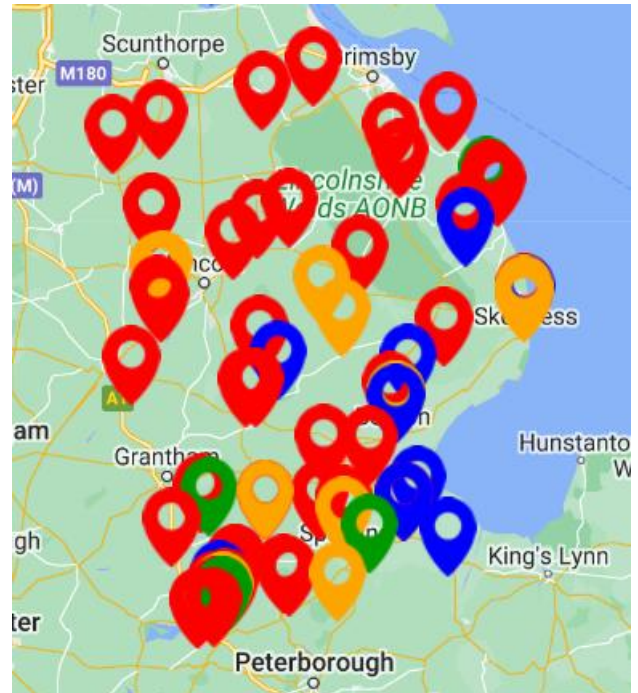
Positive - green

Negative - red

Mixed - orange

Neutral - blue

Unclear - grey



Call us on **01205 820892**

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Overview

August 2022 Monthly Report

During August 2022 Healthwatch Lincolnshire received **120** patient experiences directly to our Information Signposting Officer. This is a summary of the key themes raised by patients, carers and service users during August 2022 about services in Lincolnshire.

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



Overall Sentiment

4% of all comments were **positive**
65% of all comments were **negative**

6% of all comments were **neutral**
12% of all comments were **mixed**

August 2022 – Feedback Service Themes Sentiment



13%

Hospital Services
(All services)



43%

GP Services



7%

Community Health
Services



2%

Accident &
Emergency



1%

Diagnosis &
Screening Services
(GP)



9%

Dentistry



4%

Mental Health &
Learning
Disabilities



11%

Social Care

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

Dental Services

Key Themes

- Access to NHS dental services
- NHS practices turning into private practices




What you told us

Difficulties accessing NHS dental care in the county persist. We continue to hear from people who are struggling to find practices taking on new NHS patients. Regardless of whether a patient is seeking preventative care such as a check-up or treatment for dental problems, for many, the only option is to pay for private treatment. However, this is not feasible for the majority.

Furthermore, we are hearing from even more individuals whose practice are now no longer offering NHS services. So, these individuals are now also trying to find NHS dental care at other practices, to no avail.

Sharing your feedback on NHS dental services has resulted in change and has started the reform of NHS dental services. To read about how NHS England has acted on **your feedback** to improve dental care, click [here](#). Furthermore, from April next year, Lincolnshire's Integrated Care Board (ICB) will take over responsibility for commissioning local dental services. To support this, Lincolnshire ICB are developing a dental strategy for Lincolnshire, setting out what needs to be done over the next three years to improve NHS oral health services and drive improvements in oral health across the county. As part of developing this strategy, there will be workshops in which the public have been invited to attend to contribute to the strategy. The first workshop will be virtual and run on two occasions:

	Tuesday 20 th September 5pm – 7pm Or Wednesday 21 st September 1pm – 3pm	
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If you would like to participate in one these workshops, please contact us either via email: info@healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk or phone: 01205 820892.

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](#). We continue to campaign for NHS dental reform and to ensure that any reforms will positively benefit the people of Lincolnshire.



Your experiences



Story 1

"Patient was registered with a Dental Practice In Skegness who have recently lost their NHS Practitioner. Looking for another NHS Dentist, has slight pain but wants to get it sorted before it gets too bad."

Story 2

"I have been searching for an nhs dentist taking on new patients for the last two years."

Story 3

"I am 65 year old looking for an NHS Dentist, I have been ringing round for months, my problem is two loose front teeth one where gum receding badly, I have two broken big teeth I have been using temporary fillings from chemist for months, I'm always getting infections and struggling to eat, please advise as in no position financially to go private."



Story 4

"I'm registered with Newland Dental practice in Lincoln as an NHS patient, but have been told they can no longer treat me as an NHS patient, only as a private patient. I don't understand why, when I'm registered as an NHS patient with them can they do this?"

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.

GP Services

Key themes

- Poor communication, coordination and information sharing between services and patients
- Access to services
- Lakeside Stamford



What you told us

Poor communication, information sharing and coordination between GP services, other services and patients were raised as concerns this month. As a result of these deficiencies, patients had to chase up information such as tests results themselves and repeat their symptoms at every appointment. These issues were particularly a problem for those who accessed services out of the county. Additionally, several individuals felt that their symptoms/condition were being dismissed by their GP practice and that they really had to fight to get any support.

Others were struggling to access GP services, often being unable to get through to their practice on the phone; having to wait on the phone for over an hour or repeatedly ring the surgery to try and get an appointment. In the meantime, their symptoms were deteriorating. Concerns around the availability of appointments and the 'first come, first served' approach to booking appointments were also shared.

This month we received 19 comments regarding Lakeside Healthcare in Stamford. The comments echoed many of the issues discussed above, but especially those around accessing services. Patients struggled to access services via phone, online and in person. The telephone services in particular were repeatedly highlighted as a concern, with individuals struggling to get through to the practice on the phone to make appointments or for help with prescription queries. Furthermore, many felt frustrated that these concerns have been raised repeatedly over the past few years, but no improvements have been made.

Many of the comments this month relating to GPs were from a piece of work we carried out with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in relation to Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

Your experiences



Story 1

"Patient struggling to get through to the surgery, has an infected toe on the left foot, has been trying for the past 3 weeks, when got through they were informed (yesterday) that they would get a call back, at this moment in time, they have not received this and had requested this be via mobile phone as they had that with them, no missed calls.

Has been on the phone for the past hour or so trying to get through, but unable to. Patient is quite frustrated and suffers with anxiety when stressed. The toe is painful, doesn't mind if it is GP or Nurse Practitioner would just like to get it sorted. Does not want to go to A&E as not really the right place for this."

Story 2

"Lack of joined up process cross borders. Better liaison between primary, secondary and health care services cross borders of Clinical Commission Group (CCG) or Integrated Care System (ICS). Hard to find any positives as cross border.

Think about the needs and services for Lincolnshire patients who have secondary care outside of Lincolnshire borders. Proactive and clearer lines of communications."

Story 3

"I would like to report 2 worrying issues with this surgery:

1. Getting through to surgery – the surgery changed its appointment making system after the pandemic. Patients can now only make same day appointments and they have to phone at 8am to get such an appointment. It has become well known in the area that you need to phone on the dot of 8am and as soon as the recorded message starts, you need to press 1 on your keypad. If you wait until the recorded message finishes to do this, you will be at least 10th in the queue. This system puts immense pressure on patients who need to access care as well as on the receptionists answering the phone. There is no longer any process for booking non-urgent appointments.

2. Availability of appointments – I tried over a 3 week period to get an appointment (with any health care professional) for my 90yr old parent who is extremely well for their age, but had developed a new and potentially serious health condition. Early on, I did once manage to have a phone call with an on-call doctor (who was not associated with the practice) who told me to phone the practice straight back and request an urgent GP appointment for the next day. When I did so, they were unable to provide an appointment. I then tried multiple times over the next 2 weeks to get an appointment (of any kind). On more than one occasion, I was 1st in the queue at 8am, but there were still no appointments available. The receptionists were extremely kind and sympathetic and as frustrated as I was, but explained that they simply had no appointments available. I would like to point out that I was not trying to get an appointment for anything trivial, the receptionists agreed that my parent needed to be seen, they just did not have anyone to see them! One receptionist did let slip that both salaried GPs were on annual leave and the Partner was not seeing any patients face-to-face, but was doing telephone consultations, but even these were fully booked up. She stated that they had requested locums to cover the shortage, but had not been successful. My parent finally got an appointment with a nurse who was again very sympathetic and apologetic but stated that they were going through extremely challenging times with staffing. This is of no comfort to patients trying to access care. The nurse stated that the results of the tests she had performed (including an ECG) were of concern and would be passed on to a doctor as a matter of urgency and that the doctor would then phone my parent. It took 48hrs for that phone call to be made and for advice to be given. In my opinion, and that of many of my parent's friends and neighbours, Trent Valley Surgery is in crisis and is failing to provide an acceptable level of care for its patients.

As a result of these failings, my parent has now moved to a different surgery and within a few days of registering has already seen one of their 7 doctors and is finally receiving the level of care they need and deserves, which has included an urgent referral to cardiology at Lincoln County Hospital. At the new surgery, patients are told that as long as they phone before 11 am they should be able to access a same day appointment. They can make online appointments with a doctor up to 2 weeks in advance and up to 4 weeks in advance to see a nurse or clinical pharmacist.

In case it's relevant the 3 week time period over which I was fighting to get an appointment for my parent was 18th July to 5th August.

When I spoke to NHS111 about my parent they agreed that they should be seen in a primary care setting (not A&E), but as we could not get an appointment they advised that we go to A&E as that would ensure that they would be seen by a doctor, would have an ECG and would get blood tests. So NHS111 is directing patients, who cannot get GP appointments, to A&E."

Comments relating to Lakeside Healthcare

Story 4

"Staying on the phone for over an hour at a time just to try and get appointment or sort a prescription had cost me around £10 a time in phone charges, being in receipt of PIP that is not something I can afford. Drove to the surgery and they said I cannot make an appointment in person, I had to go back home and phone!"

Story 5

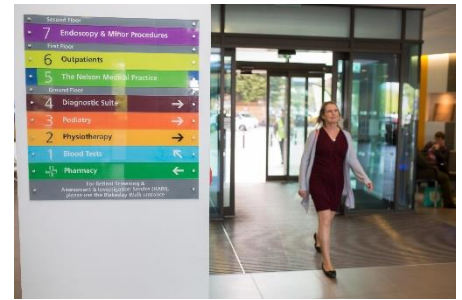
"A couple of years ago I realised that trying to get through to the surgery by phone was pointless. Sadly after two or more years this is still the case."



Hospital Services

Key themes

- Communication
- Referrals and waiting times
- A&E



What you told us

Communication was a key concern raised in relation to hospital services this month. Individuals who contacted us highlighted their difficulties with getting in contact with specific hospital wards and consultants to discuss any queries. Furthermore, worries around cancellations, length of waiting times (often over 2 years) for referrals and appointments were also shared.

Understandably, individuals were concerned about the impact waiting times would have on their prognosis, which causes additional stress and worry. For more information on waiting times for procedures and how to 'wait well', please visit the My Planned Care portal by clicking [here](#).

Finally, in relation to hospital services, we heard from one individual who had a very poor experience at an A&E service in our county. The individual had to wait for over 13 hours without food or drink.



Story 1

"I'm at my wits end regarding a letter with a referral I have received from Lincoln Hospital.

Last year my optician wanted me to have something checked out by an ophthalmologist and made the referral via my GP surgery. After waiting almost a year I received a letter to see a Consultant Ophthalmologist at John Coupland Hospital in April (this year).

After a thorough examination they said that it was nothing to "worry about" and just age and general deterioration (I am 70 now!)

However a couple of weeks ago I got a letter from Lincoln Hospital Ophthalmology unit with what I believe may be the same referral and I have been ringing all their numbers at various times of the day since to query the appointment, as it wouldn't be the first time my GP surgery have double referred me.

But I simply can not get through. As it is a general enquiry, the number I have been ringing is 01205 333581 but it just either rings and rings until the line drops or is permanently "engaged" I have even tried ringing the main hospital number and asking for ophthalmology but I get put in a queue which I think is actually ringing the same number!

As the last consultant said there's nothing major and there's nothing they can do as it is just old age so I need a new prescription, I don't want to waste the hospital's time turning up for an appointment."

Story 2

"Both my doctor and I have tried in vain to contact the cardiology department for an urgent appointment but without success over the past few months."

Story 3

"It will be 2 years I've been waiting for an operation. I've had 4 operations cancelled and then to be told, you need MRI scan first before operation which I had in July, sadly they found a grade 111 cyst, I've been waiting to be referred as its been 3 weeks I've heard nothing, so I rang Friday in tears, they have apologised, and they are having a meeting on Thursday for me and thanked me for addressing this and I'm now referred. I've never been messed about so much in this last 6/7 months.

I'm giving them this week as they have saved me a few times just feeling a little neglected."

Story 4

"Patient stated they had been waiting 7 years for an appointment with Gynaecology at Lincoln. First referral made in 2015 by their then GP in Essex as the patient was moving up to Lincolnshire. Never heard anything.

Another referral was made by another GP - still not heard anything, now their GP has put in another referral a few months ago. Patient has had a scan via referral from GP surgery.

Has a diagnosis of polycystic ovarian syndrome, and their symptoms are getting worse. In constant pain, is vomiting, passing out, pain in groin, cysts possibly inflamed. Is on pain medications but not working and things are getting much worse. 3 referrals over the past 7 years and not being seen? why would this be? were they received?"

Story 5

"Recently I have been in A&E several times and the wait has been around 13 hours. One time I went in with collapse and loss of consciousness due to my rare heart condition. However, the staff ignored me I went 13 hours without food or drink when the Dr said I could have it as I was waiting for a bed on acute cardiac ward. I went up to the staff members several times and asked for food and a drink however they said they would get me these and they never did. They still ignored me and yet it was about 3am on Sunday/Morning and they had no other patients in."



Additional Comments

This section discusses standalone cases which highlight concerns with health and care services in Lincolnshire.

Lloyds Pharmacy – Alford

We continued this month to hear from residents of Alford who are struggling to access their local pharmacy. People told us that the pharmacy is often closed due to no staff or pharmacist being available and when the service is open it is only for a very short window of time. As a result of these inconsistencies in opening times, patients often struggle to access their medication. We have made contact with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) who stated his matter is being looked into and will provide a response once they have further information.



Positive Stories

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



Story 1

"I've had very positive experiences when using the services from my GP and health centre. Registering as a patient was straight forward, when I needed an appointment I was able to have a triage callback the same day. When I needed access to my records I got an email back the same day with steps to follow. When I've spoken to the doctor I got the help I needed and the appointment was thorough and not rushed. I'm not sure I could ask for anything more, thank you to all the staff."

Story 2

"Patient's relative had to order non emergency hospital transport for the first time for an urgent appointment at Guy's Hospital London last week in July 2022. The call handler was very professional and polite and due to the nature of the urgent request (less than 48 hours prior to appointment) needed to confirm with manager if the transport would be ordered and could be booked. The patient is a cancer patient receiving their treatment in London. TASL confirmed the transport with an escort for the patient as they needed assistance due to medical conditions. Driver was very friendly and supportive of the patient and escort. Both were impressed with how efficient the service was on the day and the driver arrived at the time given (7.30 am) as the appointment was in London at 11.15 am. Relative was informed that they often take patients to London for their treatment."

Story 3

"GP was quick to act when I was unwell and referred me Grimsby Hospital, who were quick with all tests and a very quick MRI. Can't thank the whole service enough."



Demographics

In addition to location data, for those who consent, we are now able to collect demographic data from the individuals who contact our Information Signposting Officer.

Demographic	Number of people	Demographic	Number of people
Age		Ethnicity	
18 to 24	1	White: British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh	37
25 to 49	11	White: Irish	4
50 to 64	24	White: Any other White background	1
65 to 79	15		
80+	11		
Gender		Religious Belief	
Male	21	Christian	1
Female	37		
Birth Sex		Carer	
Current same as birth	14	Yes	9
		No	2
Sexual Orientation		Marital Status	
Gay man	1	Married	1
Heterosexual/Straight	8		
Disability		Long term condition	
Physical or mobility impairment	2	Blindness or visual impairment	1
Mental health condition	1	Musculoskeletal condition	1
Other	2	Cardiovascular condition	1
		Other	12



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