



# Primary Care: What people have told us about pharmacy

November 2022 to April 2023

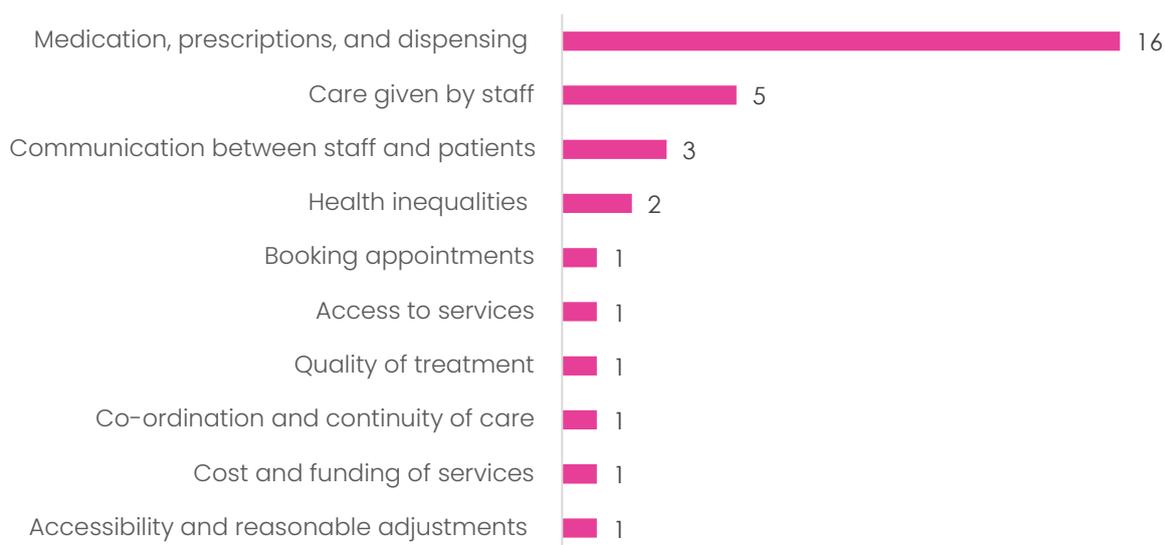
## Overview

This report summarises the feedback received from people via [Healthwatch Kent](#), [Healthwatch Medway](#) and [Kent and Medway Voice](#) about their experiences of pharmacies from November 2022 to April 2023. This covers 18 pieces of feedback. As much of the feedback came from people who contacted us proactively, there was a bias towards negative feedback. 28% of the feedback received was positive in sentiment.

The most frequent theme in people's feedback was medication, prescriptions and dispensing, which occurred in 89% of cases. Care given by staff was the second most common theme, identified in 28% of the feedback, followed by communication between staff and patients, featuring in 17% of the feedback.

This report explores the key themes and identifies sub-themes. The number of pieces of feedback for each theme is noted in brackets in the report headings and displayed in the chart below.

How many times did each theme occur in people's feedback?





## Medications, prescriptions and dispensing (16)

### Timeliness of medication (5)

- An individual had a two-month gap in their medication, including cancer medication. They said their medication was not ready to collect, whilst the pharmacy claimed nobody came to collect it.
- One individual waited three weeks for medication.
- “The pharmacy has been letting me down resulting in me receiving [my weekly] meds sometimes days late. It made me very anxious and affected my mental health. I discussed this with my GP who has now arranged for my prescriptions to be managed by another pharmacy. I’m pleased to report that the other branch haven’t let me down as yet.”

### Positive experiences

- “I pick up the medications myself ... every two months, there is no problem or delay.”
- “I collect [my prescriptions] from [the] pharmacy. ... I get my medication on time, and they are very good.”

### Prescriptions not fulfilled (2)

- “I have to take [many] tablets each day. I only just realised that the chemist has missed my mood medication for four months! As I take so many tablets, I did not realise until I became ill and aggressive and then checked my medication.”
- “I receive vouchers for gluten-free bread which I pick up from [the] pharmacy with my medication. Often, they don’t have it or some of it is missing. Often, my repeat medication is not available. This has only been happening over the last few months and when it does happen, I get IOU notes with my necessary medication in the bag, not attached to the medication.”

### Incorrect medication dispensed (2)

- An individual who was housebound was prescribed medication by their GP that was delivered to them by a pharmacy. They took the medication for three days but found that it caused ulcerations and blisters that then needed ongoing care at home twice a week from nurses. It transpired that the pharmacy had given them the wrong medication.
- An individual had several unwanted, expired and leftover drugs that needed to be disposed of, among which were controlled drugs. “The irony of it is that [the controlled drugs] are not mine! They were erroneously included in my delivery from [an online pharmacy], who refused to accept their return.” They had been trying to responsibly dispose of them, taking them to two different community pharmacies and a hospital dispensary, all of whom said that they could not accept them.

### Financial impact (1)

- An individual in financial difficulty had been paying for prescriptions for months as they had not been informed that they were exempt from paying. Once told they



were exempt, they went to their GP and were given an exemption card. They were trying to claim back the money spent on prescriptions and wrote a complaint but felt “ignored” and that “nobody [was] taking any responsibility”.

## Care given by staff (5)

### Positive customer service (5)

- “I have been with [this pharmacy] for 6 years now and find them to be very good, even during the postal strikes.”
- “[I] would like to feedback how good the pharmacy is and how helpful the staff are.”
- “They are always helpful.”
- “The staff are all friendly and very helpful.”
- “They are very professional and helpful.”

## Communication between staff and patients (3)

### Repeat prescriptions (2)

- An individual described their GP’s “contracted pharmacy” as “chaotic” and “not on top of things”, for example, “several prescriptions seem to have been waylaid”.

#### *Positive experiences*

- “I’m on multiple repeat medications. [My pharmacy] make sure they are ready and call me to remind me that the medications are ready as they know sometimes I forget things.”
- “I have repeat prescriptions from GP and I collect them from [my pharmacy]. I get my medication on time, and they are very good. Sometimes they call me to say it is ready to be collected.”

## Health inequalities (2)

### Temporary accommodation (1)

- An individual who was placed in temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse had not been able to register with a GP in their local area. They were on medication and were advised to call NHS 111 for an emergency prescription, which they did. NHS 111 advised them to go to a pharmacy, whose staff “seemed very annoyed and made me jump through many hoops in front of a whole shop of people just to get a month’s worth of medication”.

### Out-of-county caring responsibilities (1)

- An individual based in Kent had caring responsibilities for their loved one, who had dementia and lived outside of Kent and Medway. As the (out-of-county) pharmacy was delayed in fulfilling the prescription, the individual had to return to Kent before it was ready for collection. The pharmacy had also incorrectly communicated when they would be able to deliver the medication. This meant that their loved one was due to miss six or seven doses of their medication.



## Booking appointments (1)

- “[I] phoned [the pharmacy] at 11:40am and asked for a good time to turn up for a consultation with the pharmacist. I was told the pharmacist would call me back in 30 minutes. I did not get a call, so I rang again 50 minutes later and there was no reply ... 90 minutes later and the phone was engaged. When I finally got through, I was told the pharmacist had gone to lunch and to call back at 2pm. I was told the pharmacist must have forgot, as he was busy. I then took myself down to the pharmacy for 2pm when he was back from lunch as I thought that was the only way I would get seen.”