

Resident Experience Survey Community Pharmacy

October 2023



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"I don't go often to pharmacies; my Mum goes more often. In my experience, nothing has gone wrong, but it would be good to know what advice I could get there."

Female aged 16-24 from Gillingham

Executive Summary

This project aims to discover what Medway residents use their pharmacies for currently, and how they feel GPs and Pharmacists can work better together.

In July 2023, a street survey was conducted on Chatham High Street, yielding 59 responses. Additionally, 22 exit interviews were completed outside of Community Pharmacies. There were more female respondents than male (2:1), with a statistically representative spread of ethnicities and ages. Carers are well represented in the data.

Medway residents that were interviewed in the street indicated that they visit Pharmacies often, usually to collect prescriptions, but also to purchase supplies. Very few (3/78) mentioned visiting their Pharmacy for advice.

Of the three indicating that they went to the Pharmacy for advice, two decided to visit themselves, and one was directed there by NHS 111. More exploration is needed to understand how the system is referring people to Pharmacy, and what for.

Three in five people (58%) mentioned awareness of services offered at the pharmacy other than dispensing medication. Most commonly mentioned were vaccinations, blood pressure checks, selling toiletries and over-the-counter medications, and support and advice.

Nine in ten of those interviewed received everything that they needed from the Pharmacy. Seven people said they did not get everything they needed. Four out of the seven said that this is because medication they required was not in stock. Two people had issues with the Pharmacy receiving the prescription from the GP – one person had their prescription sent to the wrong Pharmacy, and the other had not yet been received.

Two in five (38%) of residents we spoke to were not entitled to free prescriptions. Of these residents, 40% were not aware they could purchase pre-paid prescription certificates (PPC) and were supplied with the information needed to sign up.

When asked how GP surgeries and Pharmacies can work better together, most people mentioned the issues they have with accessing their GP but felt that the Pharmacy worked well. People would like to see pharmacies able to hire more staff, and promotion of services provided outside of fulfilling prescriptions. Six percent (4/68) would like to see better communication by the GP surgery to the Pharmacy. More in-depth research is needed to understand what improvements residents would like to see.

Project Background

In May 2023, NHS England released their **delivery plan for recovering access to primary care**. One area of focus is expanding the services community pharmacy provides.

Community pharmacies play a crucial role in providing accessible healthcare services, with 80% of people in England living within a 20-minute walk of a pharmacy. They offer expert clinical advice, and most individuals feel comfortable consulting a pharmacist for minor illnesses.

The existing progress includes initiatives such as referrals from general practice and NHS 111, supporting patients starting new medicines, providing blood pressure checks, and contributing to vaccine programs. The goal is to further enhance these services, introducing a "Pharmacy First" service to treat common health conditions without the need for a GP visit. Additionally, services for blood pressure checks and oral contraceptives will be expanded, potentially preventing cardiovascular events and providing greater contraceptive access.

Investment in IT system connectivity is planned to improve information sharing between general practice and community pharmacy, ensuring seamless patient care. There's also a focus on flexibility for pharmacy contractors, allowing them to deploy staff more efficiently and release pharmacists for direct patient care. This involves measures like VAT reliefs, clarifying professional roles, and enabling pharmacy technicians to administer and supply medicines.

The government plans to facilitate efficiency, through measures like allowing pharmacists to dispense medicines in their original packs and expanding pharmacy hub-and-spoke arrangements*. Lastly, a collaborative effort will identify medicines that could be reclassified for wider availability based on international practices and safety evidence.

This project aims to discover what Medway residents use their pharmacies for currently, and how they feel GPs and Pharmacists can work better together

**Pharmacy hub and spoke arrangements are a type of dispensing model where parts of the dispensing process are carried out in separate pharmacy premises. The concept is that the simple, routine aspects of assembling prescriptions can take place on a large scale in a 'hub' that usually makes use of automated processes*

Methodology

This research project adopted a mixed-method approach to gather comprehensive insights.

Exit Interviews at Community Pharmacies

- **Objective:** The primary aim was to capture feedback from individuals exiting Community Pharmacies.
- **Target Participants:** The study aimed to conduct 25 exit interviews.
- **Execution:** Trained interviewers stationed themselves outside Community Pharmacies and engaged with individuals exiting the premises to solicit their feedback.

Street Survey on Chatham High Street

- **Objective:** This component sought to collect input from residents of Medway.
- **Target Participants:** The study aimed for a sample size of 50 respondents.
- **Location Selection:** Chatham High Street was chosen for its accessibility and diverse foot traffic, ensuring representation across various demographics.
- **Survey Design:** A structured survey was developed to cover a range of topics related to community pharmacy services and accessibility.
- **Demographic Diversity:** Special attention was given to ensuring a diverse participant pool, encompassing different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural affiliations.

Data Collection Instruments

- For exit interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire was used to prompt participants' feedback on their pharmacy experiences.
- The street survey questionnaire was designed to capture detailed responses from residents regarding their perceptions, needs, and experiences with community pharmacies.

Data Analysis

- Qualitative responses from exit interviews were analysed thematically to extract common trends and concerns.
- Quantitative data from both the exit interviews and street survey were subjected to descriptive analysis.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement.
- Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study to ensure participant privacy.

Limitations

- While efforts were made to achieve a diverse sample, it is acknowledged that some demographic groups may be underrepresented.
- The study's findings are context-specific to Medway and may not be entirely generalisable to other regions.

Quality Assurance

- Interviewers and surveyors were trained to maintain consistency and rigour in data collection techniques.

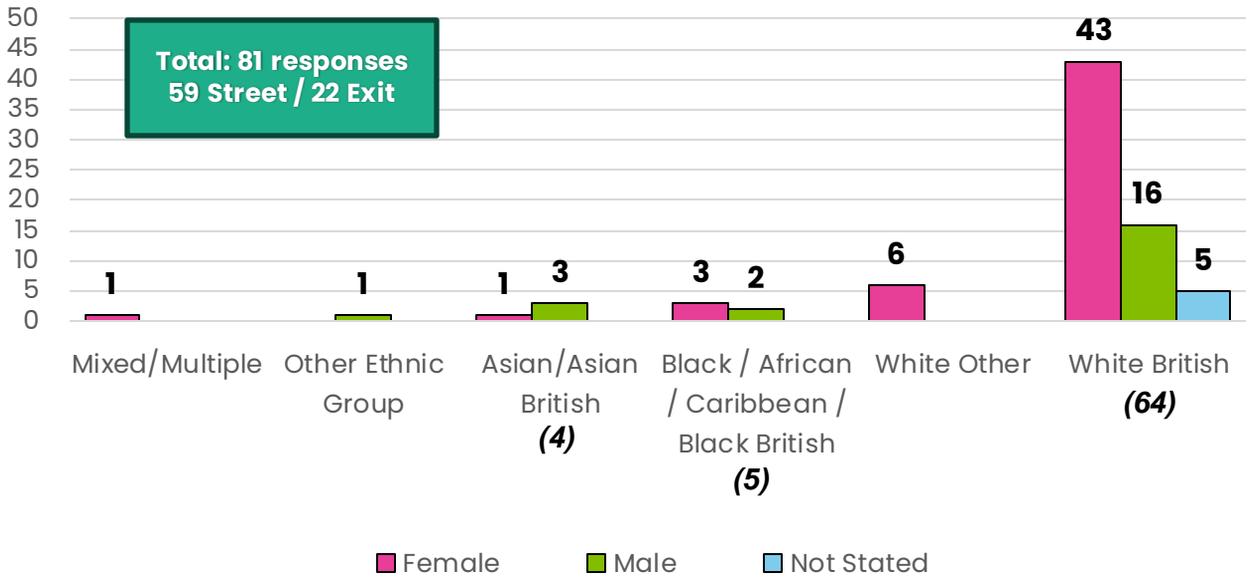
This methodology was designed to provide a robust and comprehensive understanding of community pharmacy experiences among Medway residents, leveraging both exit interviews and a street survey with a diverse sample pool.

Demographics

There were more female respondents than male (2:1), with a statistically representative spread of ethnicities and ages.

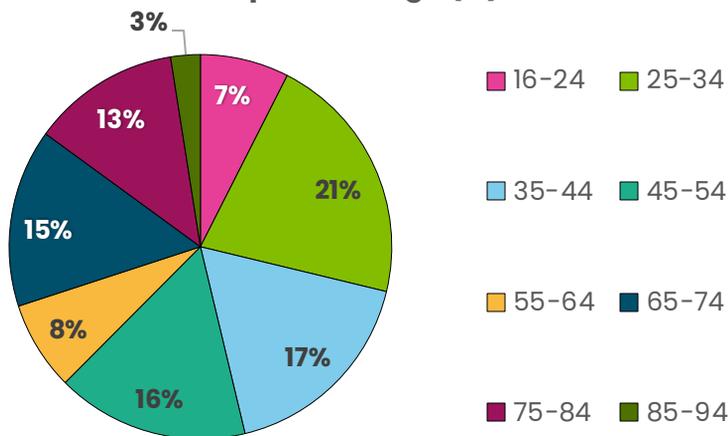
Carers are well represented in the data.

Ethnicity / Gender (f)



	Mixed / Multiple	Other Ethnic Group	Asian / Asian British	Black British / Black Other	White Other	White British
This Survey	1.2%	1.2%	4.9%	6.2%	7.4%	79%
Medway Population (2021)	2.8%	1.4%	5.9%	5.6%	5.4%	78.9%

Respondent Age (%)



Demographic	% of respondents
Is a carer	19.6%
Disability / Long term health needs	6%

D1. What is your ethnic group? [STREET & EXIT] (81); D2. Can you tell us what age you are? [STREET & EXIT] (81); D3. What gender do you identify as? [STREET & EXIT] (76); D5. Are you a Carer? [STREET & EXIT] (74); D6. Do you have a disability or a health condition? [STREET & EXIT] (15) – all excluding 'prefer not to say'

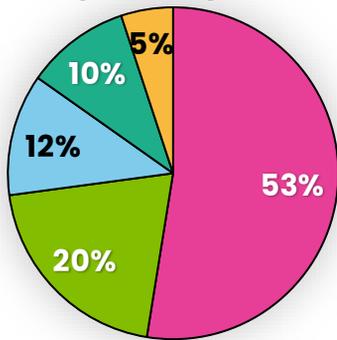
Survey Results (1)

Medway residents that were interviewed in the street indicated that they visit Pharmacies often, usually to collect prescriptions, but also to purchase supplies. Very few (3/78) mentioned visiting their Pharmacy for advice.

Of the three indicating that they went to the Pharmacy for advice, two decided to visit themselves, and one was directed there by NHS III. More exploration is needed to understand how the system is referring people to Pharmacy, and what for.

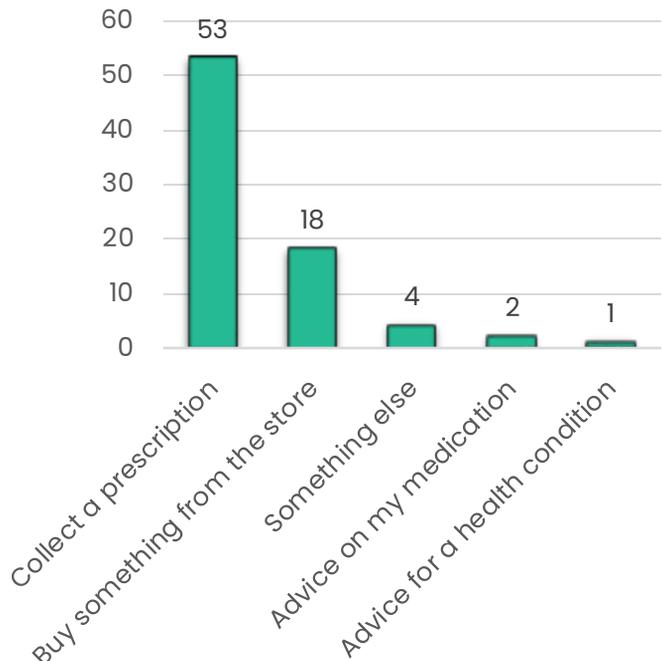
Three in five people (58%) mentioned awareness of services offered at the pharmacy other than dispensing medication. Most commonly mentioned were vaccinations, blood pressure checks, selling toiletries and over-the-counter medications, and support and advice.

When was the last time you used a pharmacy? (%)

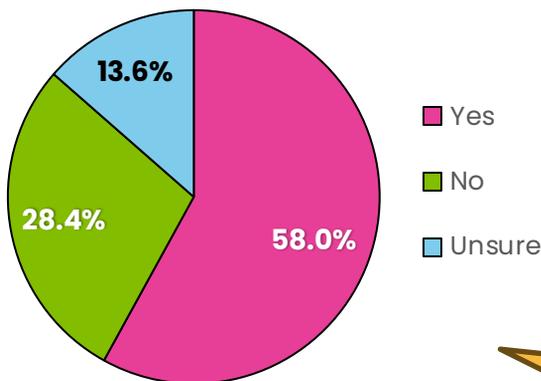


- In the last two weeks
- In the last month
- More than three months ago
- In the last three months
- Never / Don't Know / Can't remember

What was the purpose of your visit?



Are you aware of services offered other than dispensing? (%)



- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Awareness of service	(f) /81
Support and advice	26
Vaccinations	17
Blood pressure checks	8
Toiletries and OTC medication	7
Smoking cessation	1
Health checks	1

"Help when I need it. It easier to speak to someone here than at a GP."
Male aged 25-34 from Chatham

Q1. When was the last time you used a pharmacy? [STREET] (59); Q2. What was the purpose of your visit? [STREET & EXIT] (78); Q4/5. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer? [STREET & EXIT] (8)

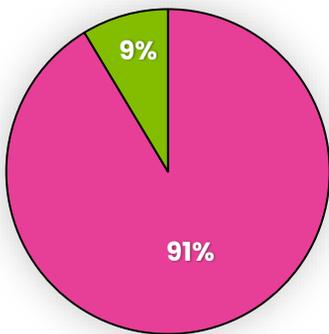
Survey Results (2)

Nine in ten of those interviewed received everything that they needed from the Pharmacy. Seven people said they did not get everything they needed. Four out of the seven said that this is because medication they required was not in stock. Two people had issues with the Pharmacy receiving the prescription from the GP – one person had their prescription sent to the wrong Pharmacy, and the other had not yet been received.

Two in five (38%) of residents we spoke to were not entitled to free prescriptions. Of these residents, 40% were not aware they could purchase pre-paid prescription certificates (PPC) and were supplied with the information needed to sign up.

When asked how GP surgeries and Pharmacies can work better together, most people mentioned the issues they have with accessing their GP but felt that the Pharmacy worked well. People would like to see pharmacies able to hire more staff, and promotion of services provided outside of fulfilling prescriptions. Six percent (4/68) would like to see better communication by the GP surgery to the Pharmacy. More in-depth research is needed to understand what improvements residents would like to see.

Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy? (%)



■ Yes ■ No

"The Pharmacy had not received my prescription from the GP practice."
Female aged 35-44 from Gillingham

"They mucked my prescription up and sent it to the wrong pharmacy."
Male aged 65-74 from Chatham

"They didn't have all of my medication in, so I am having to go back this week."
Female aged 35-44 from Rochester

"The repeat prescription process seems over long. It's admin heavy, and I have to wait five days between ordering and collecting."
16-24; Rochester

"Prescriptions need to be better as the pharmacy and GP blame each other if something goes wrong."
Male aged 75-84; Lordswood

"It would be good if pharmacies made it clearer of what they can actually do to help. I'm not really aware of how they could help me, and I just end up going to the GP instead. If it was clearer as to what they offered that would be good and quicker than trying to get a GP appointment."
Female aged 35-44; Rochester

GP and Pharmacy Relationship	(f) / 68
Pharmacy works well	27
More staff in Pharmacy	8
Promoting services available at the Pharmacy	5
Communication re: prescriptions sent from GP surgery	4

Q3. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy? [STREET & EXIT] (81); Q4b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates? Those that answered 'No' to Q4a [STREET & EXIT] (25); Q5/6 And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience? *Those with an opinion* (68)

Appendices



Questionnaire – Street (1)



Views on Pharmacy Services – Street Survey

Hi, my name is *[your name]* and I'm representing Healthwatch Medway today (show I.D. badge) – Do you have time for a quick chat?

Have you heard about us before? We are a health and social care 'watchdog', and we work to ensure that the views of Medway residents are shared to influence positive changes that address the community's needs.

Today we are asking people about your **views of Pharmacies and your awareness of how they can support you. It won't take longer than five minutes and all your answers are anonymous** and protected under GDPR.

We also have our signposting team here today, at the Nucleus Arts unit in the Pentagon Centre. They can help you if you want to share your story about your experiences of health and social care, or you are experiencing an issue and would like support. You can also contact us in a variety of ways (*give resident 'It starts with you' leaflet*)

May I ask you:

Q1. When was the last time you used a pharmacy?

- In the last two weeks
- In the last months
- In the last three months
- More than three months ago
- Never / Don't Know / Can't remember (Go to Q4)

Q2. What was the purpose of your visit? (Do not prompt)

- To collect a prescription (Go to Q3)
- To buy something from the store (Go to Q3)
- To get advice on my medication (Go to Q2b)
- To get advice for a health condition (Go to Q2b)
- Something else (please note in the box below)

PTO

Questionnaire – Street (2)



Q2b. Did you decide to visit the Pharmacy yourself, or were you directed there?

- Decided myself
- Directed by III
- Directed by my GP
- Other (please note in the box below)

Q3. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy at your last visit?

- Yes
- No – please provide detail below:

Q4. Are you entitled to free prescriptions?

- Yes (Go to Q5)
- No (Go to Q4b)

Q4b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates?

- Yes (Go to Q5)
- No – read information below and offer leaflet

“The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.

The prescription charge in England is £9.65 per item. A Pre-Payment Certificate costs:

- £31.25 for 3 months
- £111.60 for 12 months”

PTO

Questionnaire – Street (3)



Q5. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer?

Q6. And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience?

We would like to take a few demographics, so we can be sure we are speaking to a variety of people from different backgrounds, you can refuse any of the questions...

PTO

Questionnaire – Exit (1)



Views on Pharmacy Services – Exit Survey

Hi, my name is *[your name]* and I am representing Healthwatch Medway today (show I.D. badge) – Do you have time for a quick chat about your visit to the Pharmacy today?

Have you heard about us before? We are a health and social care ‘watchdog,’ and we work to ensure that the views of Medway residents are shared to influence positive changes that address the community’s needs.

Today we are asking people about your **views of Pharmacies and your awareness of how they can support you. It will not take longer than five minutes and all your answers are anonymous** and protected under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

If located at Pharmacy on or nearby high street – We also have our signposting team here today, at the Nucleus Arts unit in the Pentagon Centre. They can help you if you want to share your story about your experiences of health and social care, or you are experiencing an issue and would like support. You can also contact us in a variety of ways (give resident ‘it starts with you’ leaflet)

May I ask you:

Q1. What was the purpose of your visit today? (Do not prompt)

- To collect a prescription (Go to Q2)
- To buy something from the store (Go to Q2)
- To get advice on my medication (Go to Q1b)
- To get advice for a health condition (Go to Q1b)
- Something else (please note in the box below)

Q1b. Did you decide to visit the Pharmacy yourself, or were you directed there?

- Decided myself
- Directed by IHI
- Directed by my GP
- Other (please note in the box below)

PTO

Questionnaire – Exit (2)



Q2. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy today?

Yes

No – please provide detail below:

Q3. Are you entitled to free prescriptions?

Yes (Go to Q4)

No (Go to Q3b)

Q3b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates?

Yes (Go to Q4)

No – read information below and offer leaflet

“The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.

The prescription charge in England is £9.65 per item. A Pre-Payment Certificate costs:

- £31.25 for 3 months
- £111.60 for 12 months”

Q4. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer?

PTO

Questionnaire – Exit (3)



Q5. And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to the question.

We would like to take a few demographics, so we can be sure we are speaking to a variety of people from different backgrounds, you can refuse any of the questions...

Questionnaire – Demographics



Demographics

So we can see if people across Medway have different opinions, please provide your postcode, gender, age, and ethnicity.

- D1.** Postcode
- D2.** Gender
- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other (Please specify if you wish): _____
- Prefer not to say
- D3.** Age Range
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75-84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85-94 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 95-99 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 100+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
- D4.** How do you describe your ethnicity?
- D5.** Are you a carer?
- Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to take part in our survey. Your answers will help us to shape the delivery of services for local people.



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