



# What we are hearing

Quarterly Report: January–March 2026

**healthwatch**  
York

# Contents

Content warning: contains reference to cancer, mental ill-health, breakdown, trauma, stigma, self-harm, suicide and suicidal ideation, anxiety, distress, struggles with daily living, family breakdown.

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Key: Compliments in own words – no background, speech bubbles

3<sup>rd</sup> party reported compliments – green background

3<sup>rd</sup> party reported negative feedback – pink background

Concerns and complaints in own words – blue background

Cover photo by a member of the Healthwatch York team

# Introduction

## What we do

Healthwatch York is your way to influence local health and social care services – hospitals, care homes, GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies, home care services and many others. We make sure your voices are heard by those who buy and deliver local health and care services.

Healthwatch York:

- Provides information about local services to make sure you know how to access the help you need
- Signposts you to independent complaints advocacy if you need support to complain about a service you have received
- Listens to your views about local services and makes sure these are taken into account when services are planned and delivered

Every day we hear from people across York about your experiences of local health and care services. Where requested, we signpost and / or provide helpful information about their options. We share what we hear anonymously with the people who buy and deliver those services.

## This report

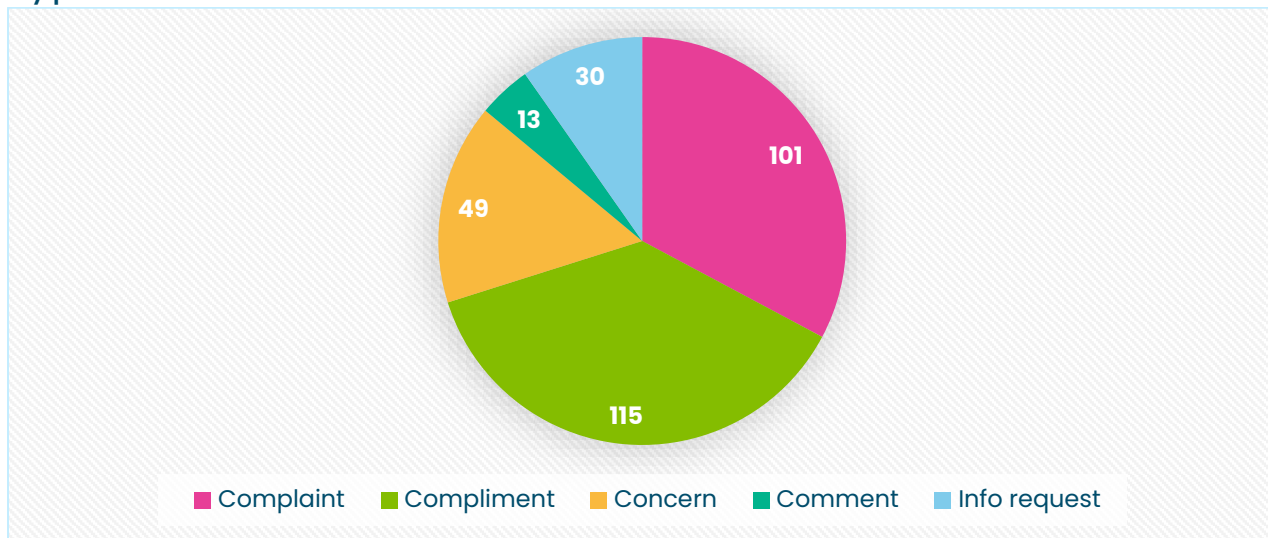
We have put this report together based on what you have shared with us in the three months from 1 January to 31 March 2026. This report gives a flavour of the issues and themes this quarter. The service areas highlighted in this report are as follows:

- Hospital services
- GP services
- Mental health services
- Dental services
- Social care and council services
- Neurodiversity support (from across the above categories)

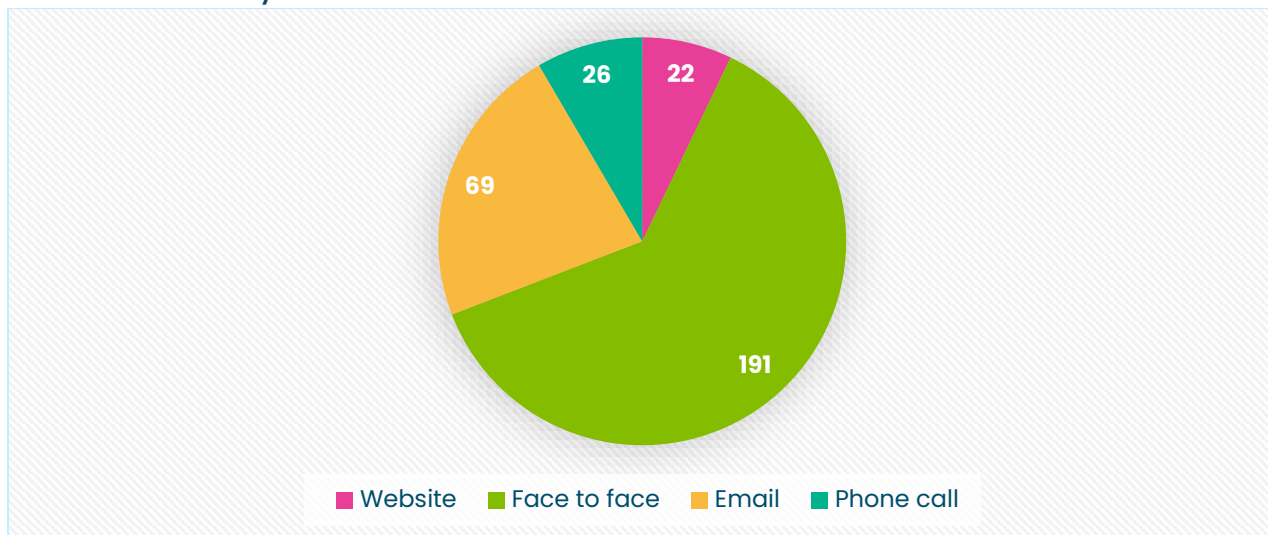
# Overview of contacts received

From January to the end of March 2026 **308** people contacted us directly to ask for information / advice or share their feedback.

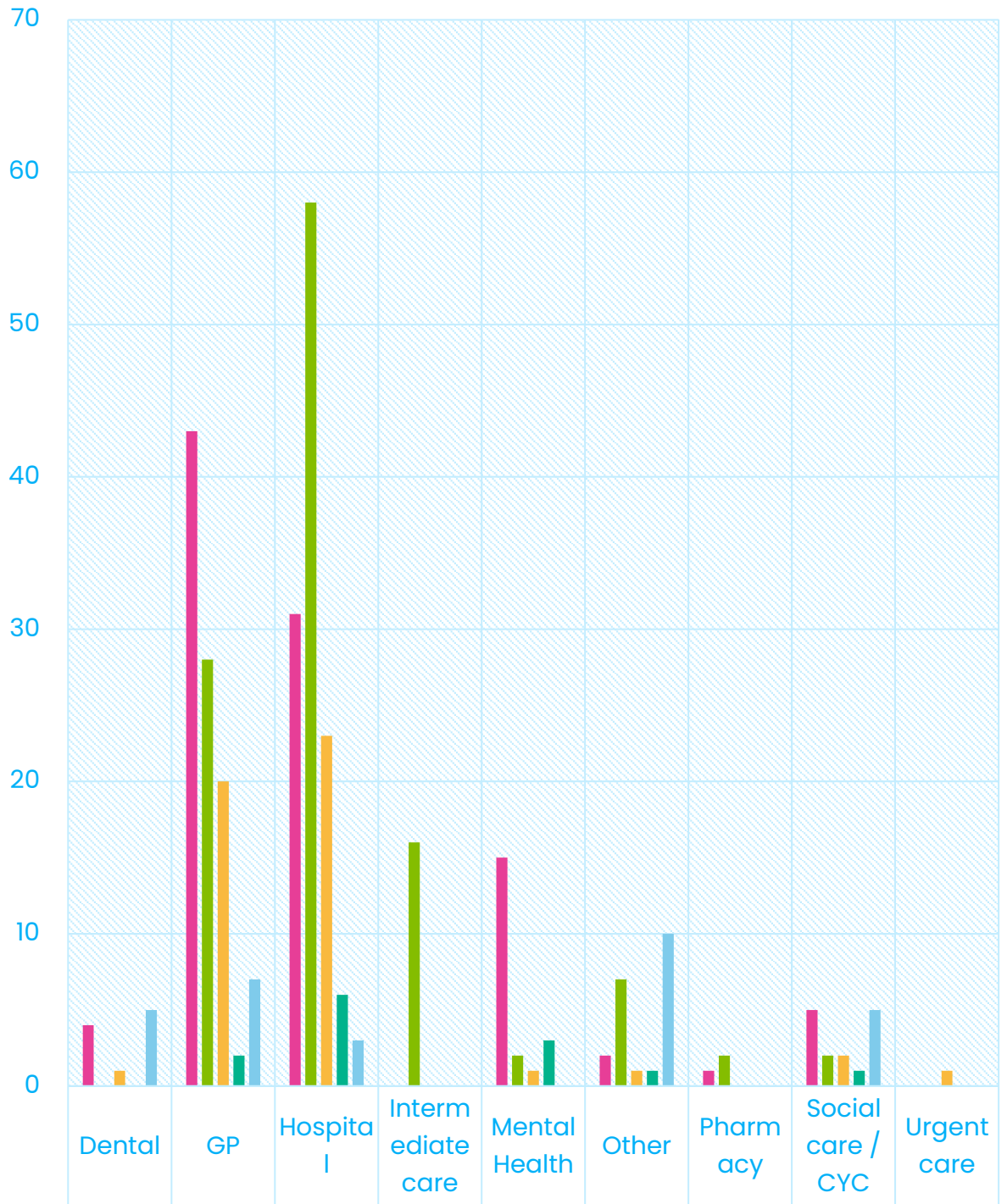
## Type of feedback received



## Contacted by



## Feedback received by type and area of care



Complaint	4	43	31	0	15	2	1	5	0
Compliment	0	28	58	16	2	7	2	2	0
Concern	1	20	23	0	1	1	0	2	1
Comment	0	2	6	0	3	1	0	1	0
Request for info	5	7	3	0	0	10	0	5	0

Complaint Compliment Concern Comment Request for info

# Key themes by area of care

## Hospital

We received 58 compliments about hospital care.

**6** I slipped and knew I had done something serious to my ankle as my foot was pointing at a strange angle. My husband took me to A&E and the care was exemplary. I was triaged quickly and they said I should go to minor injuries as they felt I would be seen more quickly. When I got there I stopped a nurse to check if I needed to book in. She took one look at my injury and realised how serious it was. She went and checked if I should be back in A&E but came back to confirm I was in the right place. Within four and a half hours, I'd been x-rayed three times, seen by doctors, they'd manipulated my ankle under anaesthetic and sent me home as I needed an operation and it wasn't possible that day. They said they needed the swelling to subside and would be back in touch about the operation. I was contacted and five days later had two plates and screws put in my ankle, which is now absolutely fine.



**6** I went via the NHS to Clifton Park Hospital for a hip operation. The consultant listened carefully and gave me a thorough examination arranging for three x-rays of me in different positions. He helped me feel relaxed about the operation. The staff day and night were seamless and I felt as if I was in a five star hotel. They didn't rush me out and gave me some equipment to help at home. The physiotherapists were very good and I still do the exercises when I get pain now. The reception staff were also lovely. It was an excellent experience.





I had two 3.5 hour surgeries at York Hospital for a torn retina and then a further operation for the same issue. The team were exceptional and I am profoundly grateful for the time and care I received. My sight is fine now thanks to them. I also had a cataract done her which was great and came for a hole in my macular to be repaired, but when I came they found it had healed itself. They were marvellous.



I've just been for an MRI and the staff member there was excellent. I am claustrophobic and panic and he was kind and patient with me and made what could have been a difficult experience much easier.



My father has had a number of skin cancers and dermatology has been very good. The nursing staff are amazing and he sees the same people every time, which is brilliant as he has dementia so it really helps.



I had vertigo and when to the hospital. They were brilliant. The staff examined me and said they didn't think there was anything worrying underlying the vertigo. But they arranged a CT scan (which was clear) to give me peace of mind and be certain. I was very impressed.





Themes from compliments included:

- Supportive staff who put anxious patients at ease
- Being seen more quickly than expected
- High quality care, especially in A&E, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, and Diabetes at York Hospital and at Clifton Park for MSK treatments



We also received 31 complaints, 23 concerns, six comments and three requests for information. Within these the key themes were:

- Long waits for services whilst in pain.
- Communication and access problems.
- Failure to recognise and meet individual needs.
- Family members not being kept up to date with discharge plans.


#### **Personal Story: "Delays for ENT appointment."**


 Our grandson has a perforated ear drum and has been waiting for an ENT appointment for a year. We were told it would be 42 weeks, but it is now more and he is in pain. We paid for him to have his ears syringed which helped a bit, but that benefit will have gone before he gets the appointment. He also had an audiology appointment and they were great. The staff member said they'd go and see if they could find someone in ENT to see him, but they couldn't unfortunately, so he is still waiting but does really need to see someone. 

#### **Personal Story: "Still waiting after referral lost."**


 I was referred to MSK before the start of covid with debilitating hip pain. I waited, still in pain for my appointment expecting a delay during Covid, but after four years I was told they had 'lost' my referral and I wasn't even on a waiting list! 


### **Personal Story: "Bad experiences."**

 I have lost my confidence in York hospital after some experiences of family members. My mum went in last year and she was walking and continent. However, she was neither when she came out and had to go into a care home as a result. The hospital also lost her teeth and hearing aids and she had hospital induced delirium for six months after discharge. One of the problems is that the staff take the same approach with all patients. The physio went and asked my mum if she wanted to get out of bed. She is quite difficult and said no - she would have done this to me - the physio said they have to respect the patient's wishes and so can't do anything else. But my mum needs encouragement and chivvy to do things. But they don't do that, so she never got out of bed. She was discharged to White Cross who were fantastic.





### **Personal Story: "Communication and information is very poor."**

 My mother-in-law was in hospital as the result of an infection. She was delirious. After two days the hospital staff said she could go home. We said no as there is no way she could have coped. She has Alzheimer's - myself and my wife have done an excellent Alzheimer's Society course. We heard there were Admiral nurses at the hospital who could help her. We asked at reception and they said no, there weren't any Admiral nurses at the hospital. We had to contact the local Alzheimer's Society who got it all sorted and got the Admiral nurses to go and see my mother-in-law. She was then discharged for respite care to The Chocolate Works care home, which has been very good. However, the hospital social worker called last week and thought she was still in hospital. The communication is clearly lacking. In all the time she was in hospital and since no care plan has been put in place. We are now looking for a permanent care home place for her.





### **Personal Story: "Lack of accessible maternity facilities."**

 I am a wheelchair user and am pregnant. I am appalled at the lack of accessible facilities for the maternity service at York hospital. For my scans and beyond there are no facilities and I am being told there is now not enough time to get things in place (I told them when I was seven weeks pregnant so they could prepare) and I should plan to have a caesarian. I have told Maternity and Neonatal Voices who are supporting me, and now I'm seeing if there are other hospitals which have better facilities. Surely I can't be the first wheelchair user to have a baby at York hospital?!





### **Personal Story: "No understanding and no care."**

 My cousin is alcohol dependent. He went to A&E last year as he'd had a seizure that lasted longer than any he had ever had. He was very confused and struggling in A&E. I recognise he can be difficult, but they kicked him out at 3.30am in his hospital pyjamas. He was found in York centre and someone called an ambulance to take him back to A&E. The mental health team got involved and the mental health nurse started an investigation into what happened. They knew he was alcohol dependent but it felt like they ignored that and him.



### **Personal Story: "Lack of care for people with hearing loss."**

 My dad was deaf and wore hearing aids. He was in hospital a number of times and at no time was any care taken with his hearing aids and to make sure he could hear what was going on. He had dementia and not being able to hear made things much worse. There needs to be a system for staff or volunteers to support people to ensure their hearing aids are charged or have working batteries and that people are supported to wear them while in hospital.




## Personal Story: "Appalling inpatient experience."




I went into hospital last march after a small stroke. In the ambulance the first question they asked was whether I had a DNR. By the time they came I was feeling much better! They said they have to ask if someone is over 70. I was on five wards in four days and it was appalling. I never saw a doctor. I had a CT scan at 3am one day. A junior doctor came and told me I had a brain aneurism and then left. They arranged for me to have another CT scan on the Friday, I wasn't told the results until Monday - so all that time I was thinking I was seriously ill and dying. They then said that there was an anomale with the first scan and it was fine. While I was on one ward I heard a nurse ask another patient if she minded saying what was wrong with her. I found that odd - a nurse should know what is wrong with their patients. In the middle of the night someone came to check my pulse. They put the reader on my finger and said there was no pulse. I said I was still alive, which they didn't appreciate and they tried the other finger! They don't seem to know what they are doing and are relying on technology and spending a lot of time looking at a screen. While I was there they wanted me to go to ophthalmology and for an x-ray, but there weren't any porters to take me and they said I couldn't go on my own. By the time I'd had that done I had missed lunch. So I asked if I could have a cup of tea and was told there weren't any cups and I'd have to wait until they'd put them through the dishwasher. I asked if they could just rinse one, but they said no, they have to follow protocols so I was left waiting for a drink. I wanted to get a wash one day and found there are no plugs in the bathrooms. They said they had to bring me a bowl of water. But because the bowls are cardboard, there were two as if it was just one it would leak. What a waste of money!





**Personal Story: "Very difficult to get into and pointless wait for information we already had."**

 I am visiting York to support my elderly mum who lives here to go to NHS appointments. We went to York Hospital for her to have a scan earlier in the week. She doesn't have a blue badge but does have mobility issues. It was incredibly difficult for her to get into the hospital. Once we had managed that she went for the scan which was very good. But we were told she would need to wait for the results. They did give us some basic information but then my mum waited, sitting in a not very comfortable wheelchair for six hours. By the time someone came to talk to her, the shift had changed, the consultant didn't really know the situation and told us what we already knew. It was pointless and frustrating.





**Personal Story: "No receptionists at podiatry at White Cross Court."**

 They have taken away the receptionists at White Cross Court podiatry department. Now there is just a screen that you need to use. When I first went there was someone to help, but last time there was no-one. I don't know what you do if you can't use the screen. It is a real shame.



**Personal Story: "Difficult to get to Archways."**

 I have regular appointments with orthotics. They are very good, but I find it difficult to get to Archways as I am blind and have mobility problems. It was much easier when the appointments were at the Hospital. I have heard that they may move again to the Community Stadium. I am worried about that and finding where they are but have been told it is easier to get to on public transport.



# GP Services

There were 28 compliments for GPs and GP practices.



Quite a while ago I was in a very bad place. I felt I had nowhere to go and was worthless. I was self harming and was crying out for help. I went to the GP practice after one bad episode where I had contemplated suicide. I spoke with the usual doctors and was given self help information.

Because of my self harm wounds I was sent to a nurse to check and dress them. I was full of shame, dread and reluctantly went in. As my step mom got up to come in with me, the nurse asked if I wanted her there. I said no. The nurse took care of my wounds and actually spoke with me. To me. No one at the surgery had done that before. I cried so much. The nurse stopped what she was doing and gave me a tissue and then hugged me and just let me cry. I felt so safe. The nurse didn't judge me. She didn't insist that my step mom come in, she treated me like a person. She was kind, caring and so lovely. She went over her finish time. She also gave me some advice from 'an older view'. It was like a lightbulb moment. She told me the glass is neither empty or full it is refillable. She said that we can change our life if we want to, the brave part was realising that it was not too late. I am now 12 months down the line, happier and more settled than I ever was before. I see life as an adventure and want to live it. I am at college and doing well. I have new friends and a new life thanks to the nurse. She is one in a million and without her I would not be here.





I took my child for a health check. They are neurodivergent and have a learning disability. The GP was amazing in the way they spoke to him and to me. They were really supportive and I'd give them ten out of ten.



I went to the surgery as there had been some problem with my blood test. The receptionist found out what it was and arranged for me to have a blood test in the surgery at 8.30am the next day as the problem had been at the GP practice end. They could not have been kinder, more understanding or more helpful.



I injured my back a few weeks ago. I had been managing it OK with anti inflammatories but the pain got a lot worse and I was struggling. I called the GP practice and got an appointment the same morning. I saw a GP who was a locum and they were excellent. They properly examined me and my back and he could feel muscle spasms. He explained that I needed to get on top of the spasms and pain to then be able to see if there was something else happening. He prescribed some stronger anti inflammatories and other pain relief. I was very impressed. He took his time and was thorough.





Themes from compliments included:

- Kind, compassionate and non-judgemental care.
- Thorough assessment of people's health needs and concerns.
- Timely responses.

We also received 43 complaints, 20 concerns, two comments and seven requests for information. Within these the key themes are:

- Significant challenges making appointments for people who struggle with IT systems.
- Difficulties travelling to appointments at different sites.
- Being refused blood tests at the GP practice.
- Failure to provide timely support with urgent conditions.

#### **Personal Story: "Had to change GP practice due to ongoing issues."**

 My husband and I had been patients at [surgery name] for years. However, the service was rubbish. We could never get an appointment. I struggle with IT and was not always able to use the online form. So sometimes I went into the surgery. If I did and spoke to the receptionist, she said I had to fill the form in online and she couldn't help. When I said I'd tried and struggled, she said that there must be someone who could help me and refused to believe me when I said there wasn't. She was always hostile. Once I went in and she said the usual about having to go online. I felt very ill and couldn't do it. So I left it. The next day I felt worse and my husband took me to York hospital where they diagnosed an embolism. 

### **Personal Story: "Very difficult to see a GP."**



I have had contact with the GP surgery six times in the past six weeks, but every time it has been by phone. I haven't seen anyone and it doesn't feel appropriate. They have prescribed me steroids and the GP is very good at following up. But I feel I should have seen someone. They also won't do blood tests for me even though I have mobility problems and have to get public transport. Last time I needed a blood test I had to get a taxi to the Community Stadium which cost £30. Even when the GP practice does offer to do a blood test, they send me to [site of surgery], which is just as difficult as getting to the Community Stadium. They do know I am a priority because they have done home visits when a GP has seen me.



### **Personal Story: "Difficult to get urgent medication."**



I have an autoimmune condition and when I get a cold it usually hits me hard and leads to me having a lot of cold sores on my face and up my nose. At that point I need anti-viral medication and quickly. However, when I fill the online form in, I get a response that says they will get back to me within 72 hours, but I don't have that time to wait. I can't get the medication on repeat prescription and pharmacists can't prescribe it independently.





### **Personal Story: "Forced to go online."**





I went in to the surgery to try and get an appointment. They told me I had to go online. I said I couldn't do that, but they pointed me to a computer and told me to fill in the form in reception. It took half an hour and was not easy. By the time I finished two people were queuing behind me. It did not seem appropriate and puts me off ever trying to get an appointment again. There were three reception staff there, why could they not fill in the form for me?





### **Personal Story: "No option to get seen."**

 I have a heart problem and whenever I go online to try and book a GP appointment it says I have to go to A&E. The last time I did go to A&E and had to wait for 14 hours when I wasn't feeling well. I can't wait that long, so now I don't bother trying to get help. The GP won't see me and I can't face A&E. 


### **Personal Story: "Not taking reasonable adjustments into account."**

 I feel that [name of GP group] is denying me fair access to healthcare and exploiting the fact I am disabled. I have ME and struggle with the phone, particularly before 11am and I take time to answer. I spoke to a lovely GP who added that information to my patient record. However, this week I had a call from someone at [name of GP group] at 9am and a further phone call that rang off before I got chance to answer the phone. I then got a message to say as I hadn't engaged and answered the phone, I would have to start again if I needed help. I just want to be able to access medical care and for them to take into account what I need that is on my patient record. 

### **Personal Story: "Keep getting sent across York when I don't drive."**


 I use the online form to book appointments for myself and my adopted daughter. We live in (area of York) and want to go to our local GP surgery, but whenever I get called about appointments they are always at (over 3 miles away). I don't drive and it is not easy to get to (other area) and it involves quite a long walk if we go by bus which isn't easy for my daughter. Why can't they give us appointments at our local surgery? The GPs are fine when you see them, but I just wish I could see them closer to home. 

### **Personal Story: "Issues with mum's medication."**

 My mum is in her 90s and I help with her medication. But we are having problems again. It is very frustrating. She had recently been prescribed a new medication and I hadn't realised. So I went online to order a repeat prescription to find that she needs a blood test on 3 March. She has to have blood tests at home as she can't get out and about. So the GP practice has to arrange it. I got in touch with the GP practice and they said they would sort it out, but they haven't done anything and she will need another repeat prescription without a blood test.




### **Personal Story: "Unable to contact by phone or online to book an appointment."**

 I have tried numerous times to contact (name of GP group) both online when the search engine persistently states unable to reach website and by telephone when at the end of incessant button pressing (Press 1 for this, press 2 for that etc.) a recorded voice tells me they are too busy to deal with me and hangs up. That was my experience today, but I am sad to say that so far as telephone contact is concerned this has been a common experience over the previous two years at least. The fact that NOW I cannot make contact online anymore is the final straw. My wife and I are both disabled and housebound so we are now totally abandoned by the medical profession.



### **Personal Story: "Not doing podiatry."**

 I have type 2 diabetes and am worried about my feet. I used to get regular checks on the NHS. But this time I asked and the GP said my feet were fine, so they wouldn't refer me to see someone. So I had to pay myself. What has happened?



# Mental Health services

We received two compliments about mental health care.



I got support from Huntington House twice. The first time I had a long wait, but the second time they saw me quickly and were very good.



We received 15 complaints, one concern and three comments. Within these the key themes were:

- Challenges in accessing the most useful therapies through the NHS locally.
- Difficulties accessing appropriate support for children who have experienced trauma.
- Long waiting times for neurodiversity assessments.
- Failure to engage with carers.

## Personal Story: "Mixed experience."



I have had mental ill health on an ongoing basis for a while. I was put in touch with a counsellor related to trauma at TEWV. However, she told me I had to 'just get on with it' which wasn't helpful and I put in a complaint. They are looking at adjusting my medication to try and break the cycle I am in and I am hopeful they are going to put me back in touch with someone who saved my life when I was first struggling. There is a meeting this week, so fingers crossed. I am not in a good way and don't think I will live much longer - I really need support.



### **Personal Story: "Don't listen to carers."**



Mental Health support is generally appalling, with failure to listen or to engage carers.



### **Personal Story: "No help from CAMHS."**



I was looking after my sister's son as she is an alcoholic and was struggling. He had a knife and said he wanted to kill himself. I contacted CAMHS who saw him. They said that he was copying his mum's behaviour and didn't need counselling. But he did really need help. That experience has meant I won't approach CAMHS for help with my daughter who is also struggling. But I know they won't help.



### **Personal Story: "Very confusing."**



I went to the GP and they said I had the early stages of dementia. I was then referred to Huntington House where I saw lots of different people at different appointments. They seemed to say they didn't think I had dementia but had depression and should change my medication. They sent me letters and forms and I don't understand any of it and found it all confusing and upsetting. I now don't know what is wrong but I don't feel right. I do have problems with my memory, I can't remember where I am going when my taxi driver asks and I forget words when I am talking to people. I just want to know what is wrong and what I can do.





# Dentistry

We received no compliments about dental care. We received four complaints, one concern and five information requests.



Within these the key themes are:

- Lack of NHS dentists in the city.
- Unclear charges and being forced to pay for private treatment.
- Concerns about failure to make adjustments for, and potential exploitation of, vulnerable people.
- Significant challenges accessing urgent dental treatment.


## Personal Story: "NHS patient, but can't get full NHS treatment."


 A filling has fallen out from the same tooth twice taking some more tooth with it. I went to the dentist to get some treatment and they said it needs root canal but they can't do that on the NHS as the NHS dentist isn't experienced enough to do it and they only have a specialist dentist there once a fortnight to do NHS work. Instead they said I would need to pay for it to be done privately. I have just been diagnosed with prostate cancer and am about to start treatment. So I want to get all the dental work done before that starts and to make sure my teeth are in the best condition they can be. However, I can't afford the private treatment for something that should be available on the NHS. 

## Personal Story: "Didn't take dementia into account."


 I explained my friend's health condition (dementia) to the dentist. However the next time she went with her family, she was told she needed six new crowns at the cost of £9,000 and they took a deposit of £3,000. But she can't deal with that amount of work or that cost. It was as if they weren't listening, didn't understand or wanted to exploit her. I was appalled. 


### **Personal Story: "Can't get urgent dental treatment."**

 I currently have a fixed orthodontic appliance in place which is causing ongoing soft tissue injury, bleeding, and difficulty maintaining oral hygiene. NHS 111 online has categorised my symptoms as requiring contact with a dentist "today or tomorrow." However, local dental practices are not accepting new NHS patients except by referral. The Humber and North Yorkshire ICB has directed me to NHS 111 as the urgent route, but the online triage result has not resulted in an allocated appointment. I therefore remain without a practical urgent pathway. This situation is compounded by my disabilities, which create barriers to accessing care via standard routes and to travelling long distances to my previous private provider. I am not seeking NHS continuation of orthodontic treatment. I am seeking urgent stabilisation or removal of an appliance that is currently causing harm. I would appreciate Healthwatch's assistance in: reviewing whether an appropriate urgent pathway is being made available locally; raising this as an access and continuity of care concern with the ICB if appropriate; advising what further steps may be available to ensure safe urgent assessment.



### **Personal Story: "No NHS dentist and sent all over for urgent treatment."**

 My previous dentist went private. I only found out when I got in touch to book an appointment about a root canal that had gone wrong. They said I was no longer a patient! I rang 111 as I needed urgent help and they sent me to a dentist in Tadcaster. I had to go on the bus and when I got there the dentist said they couldn't help me at all. I had to ring 111 again and this time they sent me to a dentist in Poppleton who did help. I now have an issue with another tooth and can't find an NHS dentist in York.



### **Personal Story: "Granddaughter needs a dentist."**



My granddaughter is on benefits and has three children. She has a gum issue and really needs to see an NHS dentist, but can't get one. I funded her previous treatment but can't afford to do it every time.



### **Personal Story: "Can my dentist charge me for further treatment?."**



I am an NHS patient and went to my dentist for some urgent treatment. The dentist took a tooth out and put a temporary bridge in, saying that I would need to come back for a permanent bridge when my gum had shrunk. I paid the full cost under band 3 for the work. The dentist didn't tell me at any point that the further work would cost me the same amount again. When I went back for the work, the dentist I had seen had left as had the receptionist and I was told that it was seen as new work as the previous work had been signed off and I would have to pay. I just wanted to check what the situation is. Do you know?



### **Personal Story: "Trying to find an NHS dentist."**



I am writing to request assistance in finding a dental practice currently accepting new adult NHS patients in York. My family moved to York last September. While we have successfully registered our two children at a local dental practice, my wife and I have been unable to find any surgery accepting new adult patients on the NHS. We have contacted several clinics, but most inform us that their adult waiting lists are currently closed. Could you please provide any information on local practices that might have space for two adults, or any advice on how we might secure NHS dental care in the York area?



## Social care and council services

We received two compliments about social care and council services.



My mum is now in South Park and they are excellent. She is still not getting out of bed, but the staff are wonderful. She has never had bed sores and has been there a year and is very happy.



My mum was in Nelson's Court after being discharged from York Hospital. She had been diagnosed with cancer and my brother and I realised we could not care for her, so needed to find a care home. I spent two weeks ringing round to try and find a care home and them coming to assess my mum.

The two most appropriate included Mossdale which is closer to where I live, so we opted for that. It has been very good so far. The staff are kind and there were a lot of activities before Christmas. I am confident my mum is safe, which is very good.



We received five complaints, two concerns, one comment and five requests for information. Key themes from these include:

- Challenges in accessing timely support.
- Difficulties when agencies don't agree on thresholds.


### Personal Story: "Don't call you back when they say they will."




I have some questions about my financial assessment for social care. I have rung them and they said they would ring back on a particular day, but they didn't. It is very frustrating as if I call, I just get an answerphone message.





### **Personal Story: "Help with continence and finances."**

 My husband has had dementia for 12 years. He is still at home, but I am finding it increasingly difficult to manage. He is incontinent and while I do get pads for free, they often don't work and I am regularly having to wash the bedding. Is there anything else we can try. He is also starting to be doubly incontinent. Are there other types of pads for that? Also I wanted to talk to someone about finances to find out what I'm entitled to and what would happen if he needs to go into care which I think might be the case. We currently have carers to help get him up most days and I pay for them.



### **Personal Story: "Council downgraded husband's needs for assessment to discharge care when needs hadn't changed."**

 My husband has been in White Cross for the past three weeks. He has complex needs and had been assessed as needing one to one support in a care home. He had been assessed by four care homes, three said they couldn't provide the support he needs, but the Chocolate Works said they could. The Council then submitted a Continuing Healthcare application which was rejected due to a lack of evidence. The Council then reassessed my husband and said that as he isn't having one to one support at White Cross (although he is always seated in reception so there is someone to keep an eye on him and he isn't able to go back to his room alone) he therefore no longer needs one to one support. So now, the Chocolate Works says they can't have him with them as they feel he does need one to one support, at least initially while he is assessed, and won't now accept him. So we are back to the brokerage to try and find somewhere he can go, but it will mean that he is not safe as there will not be any one to one support. His needs haven't changed as a result of the CHC being turned down. We are very worried about what will happen next. He really needs to be out of White Cross, but needs to be somewhere he can be safe. That is the Chocolate Works. What can we do?



# Neurodiversity support

We received three compliments about neurodiversity support. These related to GP and hospital services.



I took my child for a health check. They are neurodivergent and have a learning disability. The GP was amazing in the way they spoke to him and to me. They were really supportive and I'd give them ten out of ten.




I took my daughter who is needle phobic to get her jabs. I explained to the nurse and she was amazing. She was patient, kind and got there. We were so lucky although it did take about an hour and I felt for everyone else who was waiting...




We also received 14 complaints, two concerns, one comment and one information request from across all sectors. Key themes from these include:


- Failure to understand and meet communication needs
- Being labelled non-engaging when services fail to make reasonable adjustments to enable communication
- Sensory challenges and overwhelm in facilities unsuitable for neurodivergent people

## **Personal Story: “Issues re services not putting in place reasonable adjustments despite the needs being noted on medical records.”**

 I am contacting you to raise a concern about accessibility and reasonable adjustments across York health services, particularly for autistic and otherwise neurodivergent patients with communication and processing disabilities. I am autistic with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, learning difficulties and severe executive dysfunction, with associated sensory sensitivities, communication processing difficulties, overload/shutdown under stress, and reduced verbal communication when overwhelmed. I require written-first communication as a reasonable adjustment so that I can engage safely and accurately with healthcare. My concern is that disability-related communication needs are repeatedly being treated as an inconvenience or even as a reason that services may not be suitable for me, rather than as a trigger to make reasonable adjustments. Most recently, after being referred to Social Prescribing through my GP practice, I was told that because of my communication requests, the service was “not certain this is the right service” for me. This is concerning because my communication needs are disability-related reasonable adjustments. They should not operate as a barrier to access. More broadly, I am finding that I repeatedly have to restate and renegotiate the same reasonable adjustments across services, despite: my communication needs already being documented; a health passport being in place; a reasonable adjustment flag being recorded; and services already being aware of my autism and related difficulties. This creates repeated delays, distress, and barriers to care. It also raises concern that services may not properly understand what accessible support means in practice for neurodivergent patients. I am raising this with Healthwatch because this appears to be a wider accessibility issue, not just a single isolated misunderstanding. I would be grateful if this concern could be logged as part of your evidence about barriers to care for disabled and neurodivergent patients in York.




**Personal Story: "What do we do to ensure my autistic brother is safe if anything happens to our parents?"**

 My brother (48) is autistic and lives with our parents who care for him as he can't cope on his own. At the moment everything is fine as they can support him, but I am worried about what will happen if they can no longer support him. Also are there any support groups in York for autistic people?




**Personal Story: "Won't work with children who've experienced trauma."**

 I am part of an adopters and foster carers group and a number of children, including mine, have experienced trauma. However, we went to CAMHS for support, they said they can't help children who have experienced trauma. We have been waiting for two years for a neurodivergent assessment and have had no other support.



**Personal Story: "Some therapy made me worse."**

 The best therapy I've had for my PTSD was EMDR, but I had to pay for that myself. It was amazing. I have had a lot of counselling and therapy but the group therapy made everything worse. I have ADHD and was diagnosed via Right to Choose but am now on a two and a half year waiting list for medication via the NHS.



# Things we want to hear more about

Through the feedback we've received recently, we are aware of:

- People waiting for social care support.
- Long waiting lists for children and young people waiting for support around neurodiversity and concerns about thresholds for children's mental health support.
- People not receiving clear information when discharged from hospital.
- People giving up trying to access health and / or care.
- People being given appointments they cannot get to.

We welcome your feedback on all aspects of health and care. But we would particularly love to hear from you about your experiences of any of these concerns.

## Recent Reports

The latest version of our Dementia Guide can be found here:

**Dementia Guide June 2025:** <https://bit.ly/DemG25>

Our volunteers aim to visit a care home every month through our Care Home Assessor programme. Our latest reports can be found here:

**The Oaks:** <https://bit.ly/TheOaks0725>

**The Lodge Heslington:** <https://bit.ly/TheLodge1025>

**Amarna House:** <https://bit.ly/AmarnaH1125>

**The Chocolate Works Care Village:** <https://bit.ly/Chocolate0226>

**Meadowbeck Care Home:** <https://bit.ly/Meadowbeck0326>

And we'd love to hear from you if you have any feedback about care homes in our city.

# Current surveys

## Children and young people's mental health and neurodiversity survey

Are you a child or young person in York waiting for mental health or neurodiversity support? Has a child or young person you know tried to access mental health support or a neurodivergence assessment (autism or ADHD) in York in the last two years?

We have just launched our surveys to capture people's experiences. Please fill in our anonymous surveys to help us understand what is happening for you and your family and help improve services:

For young people: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/camhscyp26/>

For families and carers: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CAMHS26/>

If you would rather talk to us about your experience, please get in touch: [healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk](mailto:healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk) or call 01904 621133.

As well as hearing from children, young people and families, we want to hear from professionals, so please complete our anonymous survey if that is you: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SENCO26/>

Through these surveys and our wider project, we will listen to the experiences of family (parents, carers and young people) about their experiences of accessing CAMHS support for young people. We will use what you tell us to develop some recommendations to improve local services.

If you have experience of using Right to Choose, please also tell us about that.

## Vaping survey

Vaping is a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of young people. But we are seeing a significant increase in the numbers of young people taking it up. We want to hear more from young people (up to 25 years old) about their views and experience of vaping. Take our survey here: [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Z7VKLP/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Z7VKLP/)



## Waiting Well In Social Care

We are working with the Administrative Fairness Lab at the University of York on a National Institute for Health and Care funded research project exploring *Waiting Well in Social Care*. The study focuses on people's experiences of waiting—for example, waiting for a needs assessment, for a care and support plan, or for care to begin.

We are looking to speak with people who have current or recent experience of waiting for social care to take part in a one-to-one research interview. The study hopes to identify ways the process could be improved in the future, increase awareness.

If you have experience you would like to share, please get in touch:  
[healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk](mailto:healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk).

# Why we do this

We believe that the best health and care services put people at the heart of their work. We put this report together to help local services hear more about your experiences of health and care in our city. We believe they can and should use this to help shape what they do next.

We also want to encourage more people to speak up about their experiences, whether good or bad. It is important to celebrate those providing excellent care. It is also important to highlight what could be improved – when we share what doesn't work, we provide those delivering and buying care with an opportunity to make services better.

This report also gives more insight into the work we do through our signposting, information and advice service. This service exists to:

- help people find out about services and support available to them
- provide information that can help people understand their options and make decisions about health and care
- provide a listening ear to anyone who has had a difficult experience

We hope you find this report of interest, and please get in touch if there is anything we can help you with.

# Glossary of terms used

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	Accident and Emergency (also ED or Emergency Department.)
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder – now recognised as a single condition with three types, inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and combined.
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. In this area, these are provided by TEWV (see below).
<b>CHC</b>	Continuing Healthcare - NHS Continuing Healthcare funding is a free package of care provided by the NHS to individuals 18 years and over with significant healthcare needs.
<b>CT</b>	Computed Tomography – a medical imaging scan
<b>CYC</b>	City of York Council
<b>DNR</b>	Do not resuscitate (also sometimes DNA CPR – do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation; or ReSPECT – Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment)
<b>EMDR</b>	Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy is a mental health therapy technique
<b>ENT</b>	Ear, Nose and Throat – a medical specialty focused on issues affecting the ears, nose, throat, head and neck
<b>MRI</b>	Magnetic Resonance Imaging – a scanner that uses strong magnetic waves to provide images of organs in the body.
<b>MSK</b>	Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions affect your joints, bones and muscles and sometimes associated tissues such as your nerves. They range from minor injuries to long term conditions.
<b>PTSD</b>	Post traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition caused by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, leading to severe anxiety, flashbacks, and emotional distress.
<b>TEWV</b>	Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. They hold the contract for delivering NHS mental health services for York and North Yorkshire.



# healthwatch York

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