

# You Told Us

April – June  
2026



# You told us...

Between April and June 2026, feedback received from people across County Durham was analysed to identify key themes and emerging trends relating to health and social care services. The insights gathered inform our future engagement priorities and help identify issues that may require escalation to service providers for further consideration and action.

We engaged with...



members of the public, patients and charity sector

We heard from...



people about their experiences of health and care

We reached...



people through our social media and newsletter

## We had the most feedback about...

Services



General Practice



Dentistry



Community Mental Health Team

Themes



Access

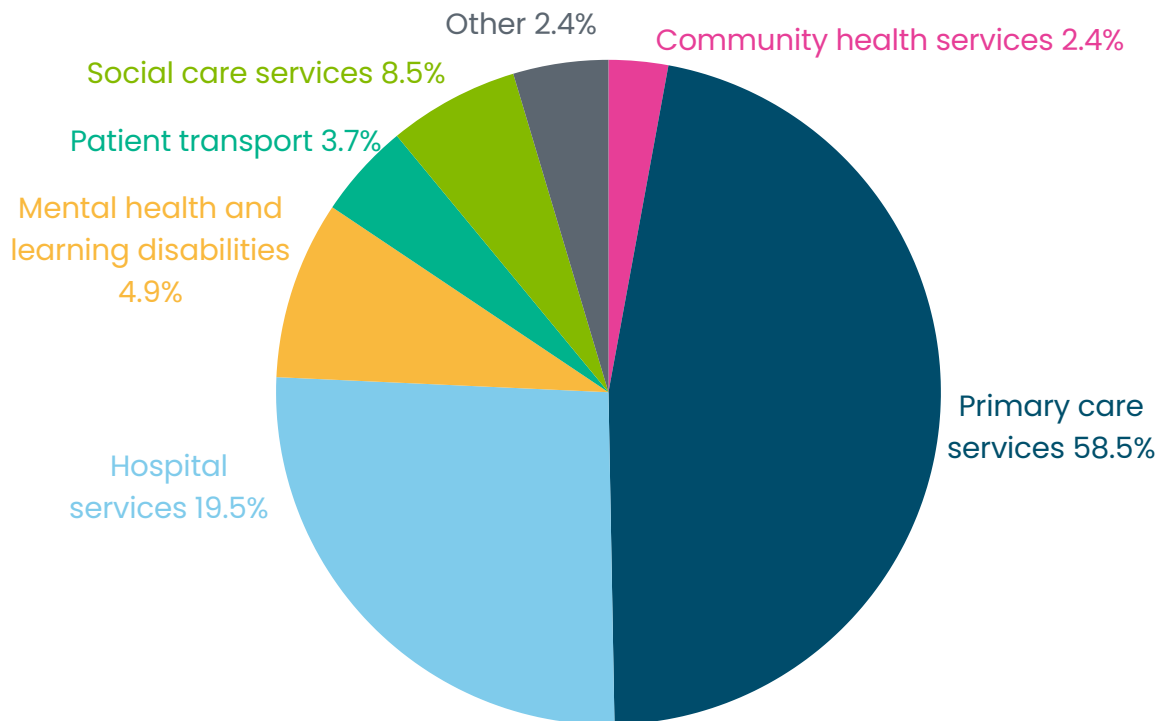


Caring, kindness, respect and dignity

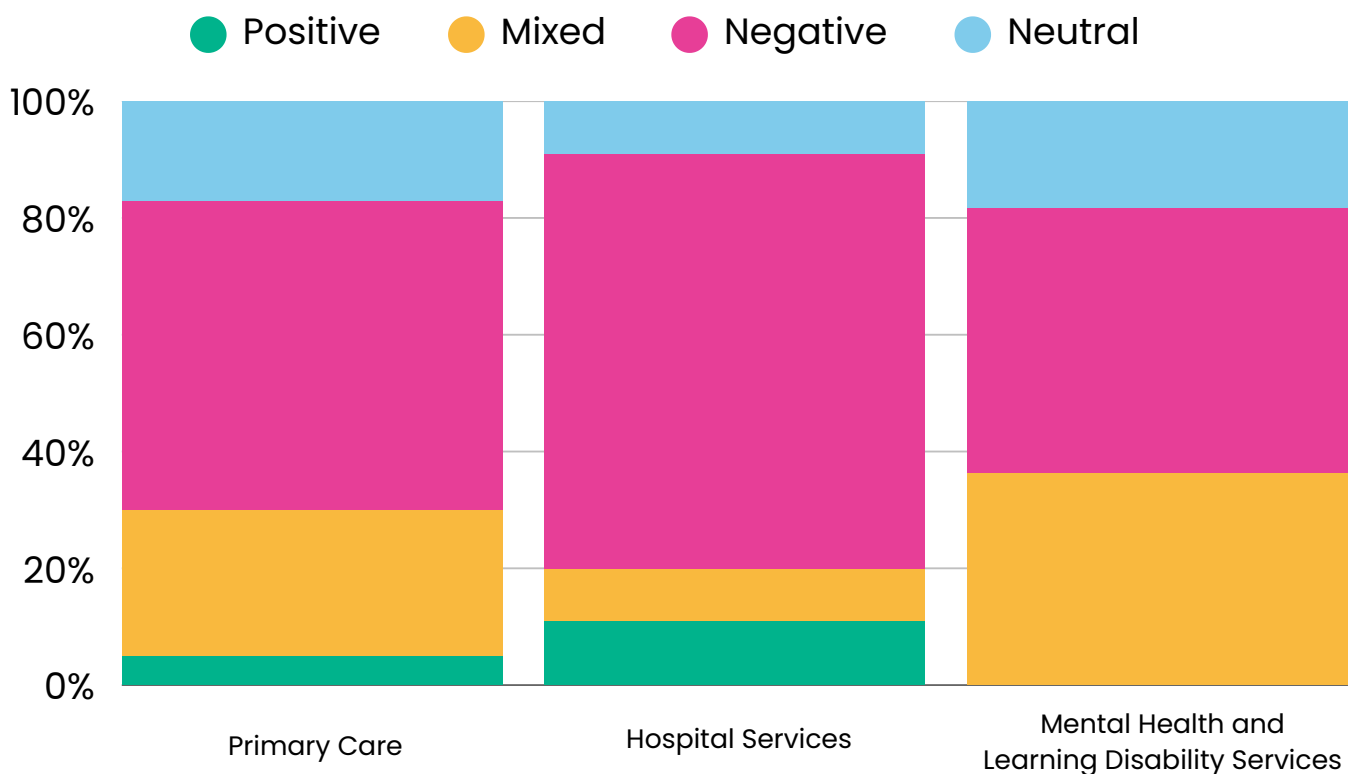


Face to face appointments

# Most common services you used



Patients gave us the most feedback about Primary Care, hospital services plus mental health and learning disability services, and this is how they feel (%)



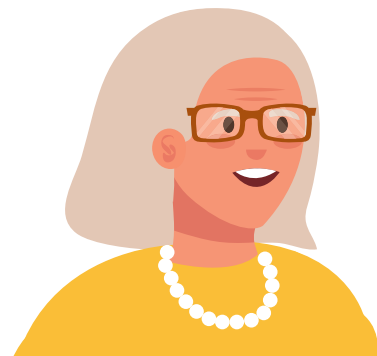
# You told us...



As a Social Prescriber Link worker, I'm supporting a client whose 90-year-old mother has dementia but is still living independently in her own home. She is under a number of different services, but the family feels they're not getting the help and support she needs. The son is retired and has Power of Attorney for their mum.

She is under the Eye Infirmary and is supposed to receive eye injections every two months, but the family has been told these have been delayed due to staff shortages. She is also under the bowel and bladder service. The family would like her to have pull-up incontinence pants because she doesn't get on with the standard pads, but they've been told she can't have these until she's had an assessment. Unfortunately, there are no appointments available until July because of staffing shortages.

The family is becoming increasingly worried and feels that, given her age and vulnerability, she should be treated as a priority. They are concerned she may not receive the care and support she needs in time. They would like to know what can be done to help.



I was sent for a scan [on my leg] and told to ring the GP in the afternoon for the results. I called on the afternoon (Thursday) and they said the GP had not had a chance to look at the scan and would call back later that day. They did not. I received no phone call so called again on the Friday morning, all the while in pain. The receptionist said the GP had looked at it and there was nothing there. I called back in the afternoon and asked to speak to the GP directly. The GP rang me back a 5.15pm to say they had looked at the scan and there was indeed a superficial blood clot (Superficial Thrombophlebitis). They gave me antibiotics and cream.

I am very concerned the receptionist stated that the GP had looked at my scan when they obviously hadn't and that she gave out life threatening information over the phone. It's really scary.



# You told us...



Having previously had a number of referrals to the breast clinic at the University Hospital in Durham I required another referral last month and this time attended Darlington. The difference in approach and feedback is noteworthy.

There was a relaxed discussion and thorough examination with Dr Toward prior to the mammogram and ultrasound. He also offered me a review post investigation regardless of outcome if I wanted (fortunately no further treatment was required). Today I received a letter providing comprehensive feedback of the discussion and outcome of investigations.

This appointment has been so far removed in terms of patient experience from most of my previous appointments, that I have to commend the department on changes made in light of the well publicised issues and on Dr Towards professional but empathetic approach.



I cannot recommend Dr. Matthew Carnell from Peterlee Health Centre highly enough. From the moment my appointment began, he demonstrated absolute professionalism, deep medical knowledge, and a genuinely caring approach.

Dr. Carnell took the time to truly listen to my concerns without making me feel rushed. He was incredibly understanding, patient, and empathetic throughout the entire consultation. He explained everything clearly and made sure I felt completely comfortable and involved in my care plan.

It is rare to find a doctor who perfectly balances top-tier clinical expertise with such a compassionate bedside manner. If you are looking for a doctor who is professional, thorough, and truly cares about his patients, Dr. Carnell is exceptional. Thank you for the outstanding care!



# Word on the street...

We asked our volunteers to gather information they are hearing about health and social care services whilst they are out and about. Here are some of the experiences people have shared:

Concerns about the ongoing issues at Lanchester Medical Group following the CQC inspection rating of inadequate.

Concerns raised from residents in Tow Law after the Pharmacy moved locations, it is now located on a steep hill and further for many patients to travel to get there.

Concerns about the care and treatment at UHND following several worrying reports in the press. So much so, people are requesting alternative hospitals outside CDDFT trust.

Confusion over contradictory medical appointment letters received from the NHS.

## Word on the street updates

We have now put together a report on hospital booking systems with information for patients on how the systems works and advising services on best communication with patients.

[Read more on our website.](#)

# Our engagement activities this quarter were...

## In April

- Seaham Men's Cee
- Skerne Medical Group, Sedgefield
- A walk through memory lane, Shildon
- Shildon Alive, Community Hub
- Willington Methodist Church



## In May



- St. Andrews Methodist Church, Brandon
- Bullion Hall, Chester-le-Street
- Blackhall Community Centre
- Easington Welfare
- Plus, our very own Carers support group ran by Julia at Hamsteels Community Centre in Esh Winning.

## In June

- FAB Group, Aspire: Chester-le-Street
- Wear Together, Stanley
- SPA Group, Brandon
- Companionship Group, Belmont
- Action Deafness, Langley Moor
- Shildon Alive, Community Hub
- Willington Methodist Church
- Pain Support Group, Seaham
- Teesdale Shed, Barnard Castle



# We're Listening

**Your voice matters and we want to hear it.**

Whether it's a general experience or a specific enquiry, we're here to help.

If you'd like to leave feedback about a specific service (like your GP Practice, care home or hospital) the best place to do that is on our website:

**[www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk)**

Our full contact details meanwhile are on the final page of this document including our social media accounts.

**healthwatch**  
County Durham



# Stay up-to-date with our activities



News update - July 2026



In this edition, we're looking at mental health services across Durham and the Tees Valley in a joint report with the local Healthwatch organisations across Teesside, plus Alcohol Awareness Week this month.

We're also sharing our Men's Health Week work focusing on wellbeing and activity groups across County Durham and we're also sharing a research opportunity for people using weight loss injections.

Always, thank you for your continued support — your feedback helps us make a real impact. 🍏

Our monthly newsletter keeps you in the loop with where we've been and where we're heading next, plus the latest news on events, campaigns, and projects across County Durham.

It's the best way to stay up-to-date with our work, see how your feedback is making a difference and get involved in upcoming activities.

Read or sign up [here](#).

You can also drop us a follow across our social media accounts for regular news, information and our work updates.

# healthwatch

## County Durham

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