

# You Told Us

What have we heard in  
May 2024?



# We listen:

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Based on May 2024, we've analysed the feedback we received to get an overview of the most common themes within health and social care in Westmorland and Furness.

By encouraging people to share their experiences, it informs our future focus of engagement as well as highlighting any issues that we may need to escalate directly to the provider. We also offer information and signposting if people need further support or want to make a complaint.



## We engaged with 792 people

Feedback Themes

We heard the most about:

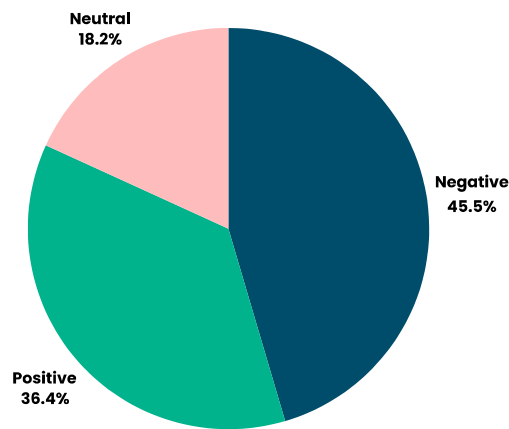
- **Quality of treatment**



# Your experiences were:

Positive feedback was around:

- Referrals
- Quality of treatment
- Accessibility and reasonable adjustments
- Caring, kindness, respect and dignity



Negative feedback was around:

- Medication, prescriptions and dispensing
- Diagnosis
- Access to services
- Communication with patients
- Quality of treatment

## Quality of treatment

A member of public shared her experience of getting a new dentist in Milnthorpe (she lives in Kendal), the dentist is NHS and as a new patient they had obligatory x-rays etc. After an initial x-ray they referred for a further x-ray at Westmorland General Hospital for teeth. The results were that she needed extractions as part of her teeth had pockets above her gums and would lead to infections and abscesses. She was referred to the dental unit in WGH and given a medication for osteoporosis so needed extra care. She highly recommends the dental unit at WGH and also said that Milnthorpe dentists were excellent with providing her pain relief for her dental condition.

## Medication, prescriptions and dispensing

A gentleman got in touch asking for help finding him the Lloyds Pharmacy telephone number at Westmorland General Hospital as he couldn't find one. He gets lidocaine pain patches from the pain management clinic at WGH and has called them repeatedly over the last three weeks to renew his prescription but has not had a response, nor has his prescription been received at Lloyds. After he called HW he managed to find a number for the pharmacy. He has run out of pain killers and is in agony with a long-term broken back and other issues. Healthwatch advised him to call 111 who can give him a prescription, and have contacted the Pain Management Service to find out what's going on and, to hopefully, expedite the situation.

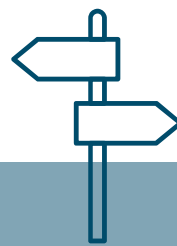
# Our actions were:

## Conclusion of our 'Adults Autism Pathways' project engagement

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness held a focus group consisting of autistic people who'd contributed to our project via case studies, to look at the suggestions for recommendations. The final report will be written and published in the upcoming months.

## Attended Tuesday Talks - a South lakes Dementia community monthly session

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness attended the monthly session to speak to people living with dementia and their carers. We spoke about our work and signposted the attendees appropriately. Furthermore we discussed issues they had about dentistry, cost of living/heating support and benefit enquiries. .



**162** people were signposted to the right place to get further assistance and help



**371** people were reached through our social media and newsletter

The Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness team are available to talk between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. We're here to listen to your views and experiences, and we can help you find the health and care services you are looking for.

There are multiple ways you can share your feedback with us. If you have an inquiry, or want to share your general experiences, you can call the office on 300 373 2820 or email [info@healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk)

If you would like to leave feedback about a specific service, such as your GP Practice, care home or hospital the best place to do this is on our independent Feedback Centre at [www.healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestfurn.co.uk)

# Case Study: Mixed feelings with cancer “all clear”

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Please note: For anonymity purposes the names of the individuals have been changed.

“John” a south Cumbrian resident, met with me recently after just receiving his “all clear” from cancer. He was obviously relieved to receive such good news but wanted to highlight some concerns with his treatment. John was diagnosed with kidney cancer in January 2022 and had his kidney removed in February 2022.

“Treatment was really quick which was good as from the time I was diagnosed to the date it was taken out my tumour had grown by more than 3cm.”

However, even though happy with his surgery he wanted to highlight the follow up treatment he received. In June 2022 he went back to see his consultant for a follow up at Westmorland General Hospital, in Kendal, and expressed how down he was feeling.

“I had been treating my cancer like a cold while receiving treatment, but once treatment had finished it hit me and I got depressed with reflecting upon it.”

He had been having suicidal feelings, poor mental health and constantly felt fatigued. When he told his consultant about his feelings his consultant told him that he can go and speak to his cancer nurse regarding these.

“I hadn’t had a cancer nurse. I didn’t get one until June 2022.”

Throughout this time, he had received no support for his health and well-being.

The second thing John wanted to highlight was a possible misdiagnosis of his cancer. When we met, John had just received a copy of his medical records. In 2016 John was sent for tests and scans regarding his bowels following on from unexplained bleeding. At his scan, his kidney was scanned, and a large left renal mass was found on his kidney as an incidental finding.

John told me that he was never informed of this, and it has been a total shock to see this on his records. When his cancer was diagnosed in January 2022 it was mentioned about this original lesion in his records stating “a 14mm lesion in the same area was present several years ago” He questions why he was never informed of this and is worried that he may have had cancer since 2016 which had not been acted upon ending up with a more aggressive treatment.

“Even though I love life now I don’t have a life. I used to work full time as a chef but have not worked for over two years now. I feel isolated, I can’t go out with friends as always tired. The cancer’s isolated me.

John added: “Cancer affects more than just you. It affects relationships around you, it can destroy everything.”

Even though shocked at his recent discovery, John is trying to look forward. He is thankful he has now got the “all clear” and wakes up every day thankful of everything with a new zest for life.

John was signposted by Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness to:

- his local independent NHS Complaints advocacy, an independent service that supports people through the NHS complaint process. He wanted answers to why he was not made aware of his previous scan’s results and if this would have affected his treatment.
- local men’s mental health and peer support groups within his area.
- to a local volunteering organisation to see what opportunities may be on offer to him to help reduce his social isolation, make new skills but be flexible for his health condition.