

# You Told Us

What have we heard in  
March 2025?



# We listen

Based on March 2025 we have analysed the feedback we received to get an overview of the most common themes within the health and social care in Cumberland.

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

## We engaged with 567 people



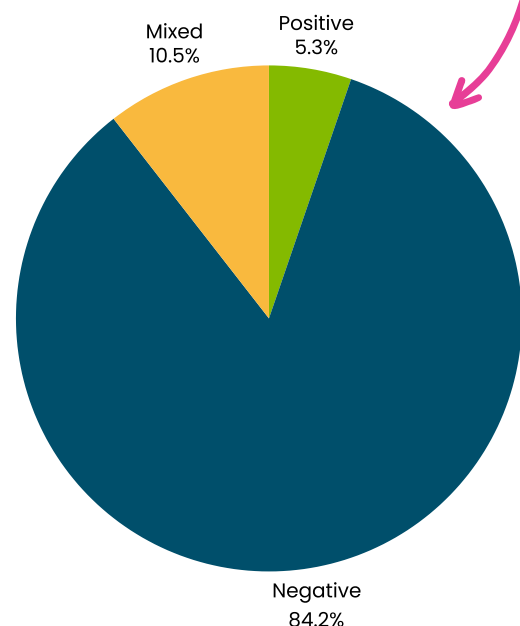
We heard the most about:

### Accessibility to NHS Dentistry Services

Negative feedback was around:

### Difficulties gaining GP and NHS Dentist appointments

Snapshot of feedback themes



# Your experiences were:

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## “I can't find an NHS Dentist”

Healthwatch Cumberland received a significant amount of feedback around the difficulties of locating an NHS dentist that is accepting patients.

*“Dentists- what dentists? No NHS Dentists in this area so had to go private which we can barely afford.”*

*“Last time I saw a dentist was in January 2019. Then my dentist went private and I no longer was able to go as I can't afford it.”*

*“Impossible to get an NHS Dentist in Cumbria for years. ”*

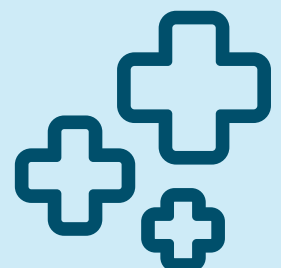
Healthwatch Cumberland advised to contact a Mydentist practice. These dental practices are primarily private however, offer some NHS dentistry services. This feedback theme of dentistry has been consistent and has been added as an upcoming article subject which will be posted on our website in the coming months. This will feature information about NHS Dentistry services.

## Accessing the GP surgery

Healthwatch Cumberland received a complaint regarding a GP surgery giving a long wait (2 weeks) for appointment when patient is experiencing breast cancer symptoms and should be seen much sooner.

We also heard from feedback that a patient could not get an appointment as the GP Surgery were not answering the phone.

*“I really struggle to get a doctors appointment, I have type 1 diabetes and blocked arteries in my thighs. I start ringing at opening time but more often than not I am told that there are no appointments left. I have a list of problems I would like help with but haven't been able to see a doctor in months.”*



# Our actions this month were:

## NHS App Training

Hosted in the Carlisle office, we held a networking event inviting anyone who wished to attend on the 6<sup>th</sup> March. In response to feedback, Healthwatch Cumberland with the contribution of our volunteers, decided it was necessary to offer NHS App training to assist with NHS accessibility issues.

## Listening Cafe's

Engagement Officer Andy has made arrangements to relocate Workington listening cafe to the Workington Family Hub library. Our other listening cafe's across Cumbria have been successful with our newest addition being in Keswick. These drop in's provide a space for members of the community to speak to us and receive signposting to relevant services to assist with any Health and Social care related issues.



**386** people

Were signposted to the right place to get further assistance and help



**10.9K** people

Were reached through our social media and newsletter

The Healthwatch Cumberland 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 300 303 8567 or email us at [info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcumberland.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.healthwatchcumberland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcumberland.co.uk)

# Personal Story

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***For anonymity reasons the name of the individual has not been included in the case study and some potentially identifiable details have been redacted.***

**Healthwatch Cumberland received this personal feedback in March regarding how a failure to arrange appointments led to their partners death.**

“My husband was contacted by his cardiologist on 16th April 2024 to tell him he had at severe aortic stenosis and that he needed a dobutamine stress echo (DSE) as soon as possible.” The cardiologist stated they would even push him in between other appointments. “This was not done”.

5 weeks later on 20th May 2024, as we did not consider this as urgent, the cardiologist still hadn't arranged the DSE. “They asked us if my husband had the DSE and when we said “NO”, they looked shocked and a bit worried.”

The cardiologist rang their secretary and asked for an urgent appointment to get the test, there was an available app for the next day on 21st May 2024. This was “too little, too late by this time my husband's legs had severely swollen and broken out in water blisters.”

He passed away two and a half weeks later (8th June 2024) from heart failure.

**Healthwatch Cumberland share this story this month to raise awareness for the impact of delayed appointments.**

Healthwatch Cumberland is incredibly grateful to this individual for sharing their experience with us.

Healthwatch will share this experience with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board via the North East and North Cumbria Healthwatch network, raising areas of concern to encourage learning from this incidents.



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