

Report on Consultation on Pharmacy Standards

Background

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has developed nine new standards for pharmacists to ensure that patients receive safe and effective care, permitting individuals to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing. The new standards focus on the need to provide person-centred care and understanding what matters to each individual person.

Healthwatch Wandsworth launched a survey to measure the experiences and satisfaction levels of local residents with their current pharmacy services, with a view to measuring current practice against the newly developed standards and informing future strategy.

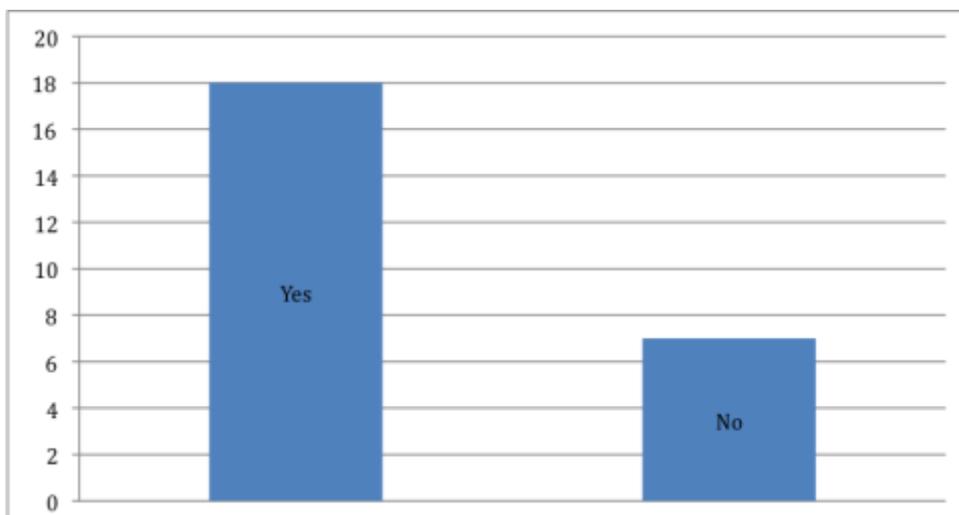
The consultation was open from 1st May 2016 to 8th June 2016.

Findings

28 respondents completed the survey, sample of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The survey was used at outreach sessions at the following community based organizations and events; What is Normal Anyways, a wellbeing event in Putney, Be Enriched who provide free nutritious meals and education in Wandsworth, Crisis in Mental Health Event, BME mental health group in Battersea and Carers' Centre, Wandsworth. A mixture of open and closed questions was used to draw out individual experiences, their thoughts and suggestions, through which we drew certain conclusions around patient experiences with pharmacists in Wandsworth.

As a starting point, we asked respondents to provide their general perception of services provided by their pharmacist. The response to this question would not only provide an idea of the bigger picture but could also act as a starting point in understanding data suggesting a positive or negative reading of pharmacy services in the locality.

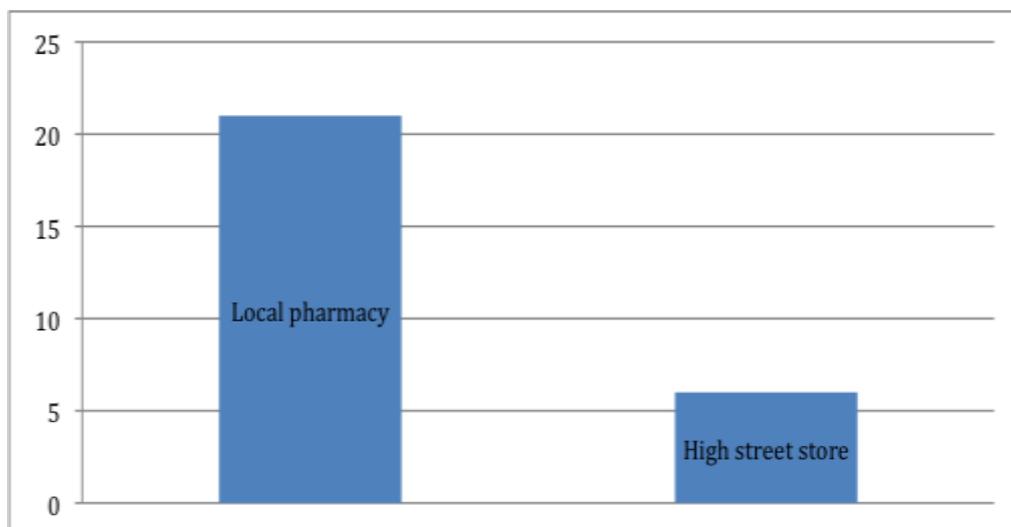
Graph 1: Are you currently happy with the service you receive from your pharmacist?



Graph 1 demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of people surveyed are satisfied with their pharmacy service; only 28% of respondents suggested displeasure with their pharmacist while 72% were content. This largely positive image of pharmacists in Wandsworth suggests that pharmacists are consistently providing services that meet the expectations of local residents, indicating a level of personalised service and patient-centered care.

In order to understand where local people choose to visit for pharmacy services, we asked respondents to disclose whether they visited a local pharmacy or a high street store:

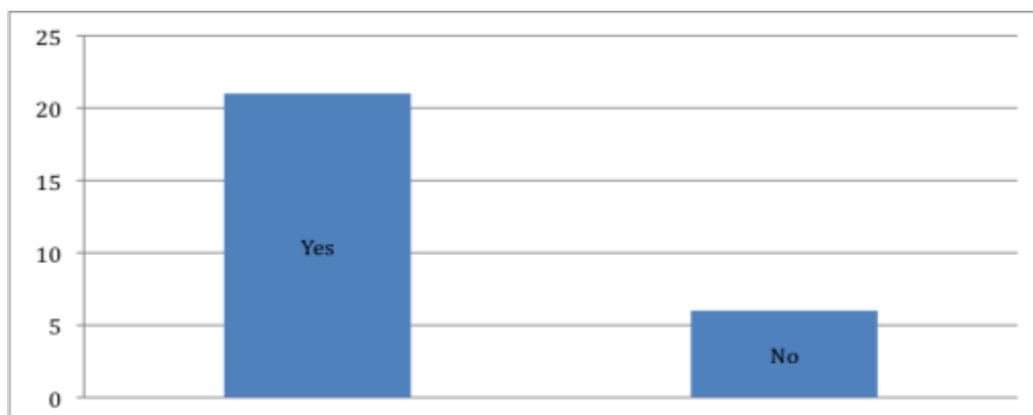
Graph 2: Where do you visit a pharmacy service?



The results suggest that an overwhelming number of people choose to visit their local pharmacy over a high street store such as Boots or Tesco. More than 4/5 (84%) of people visit a local pharmacy while less than 1/4 choose a high street store (24%). This could suggest a higher level of trust for local pharmacies which may suggest that high street stores retain a corporate image or profit-driven image.

We wanted to ascertain respondents' level of accessibility to the local pharmacist:

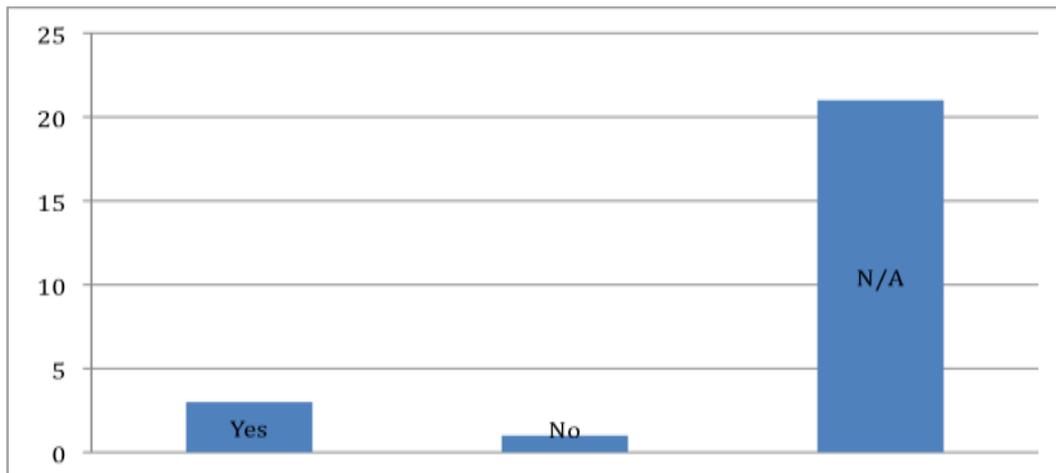
Graph 3: Do you find it easy to speak to a pharmacist when required?



Participants remained positive in their response to this question, with almost 3/4 of respondents finding it easy to speak to their pharmacist and just over 1/2 of respondents claiming difficulty (28%). This data suggests that pharmacists are largely accessible and demonstrate a capacity for effective communication.

In order to understand if local pharmacists are responsive to varying requirements in the locality, we wanted to find out whether interpreter services were provided for those requiring such a service.

Graph 4: Does your pharmacist provide an interpreter service, if required?

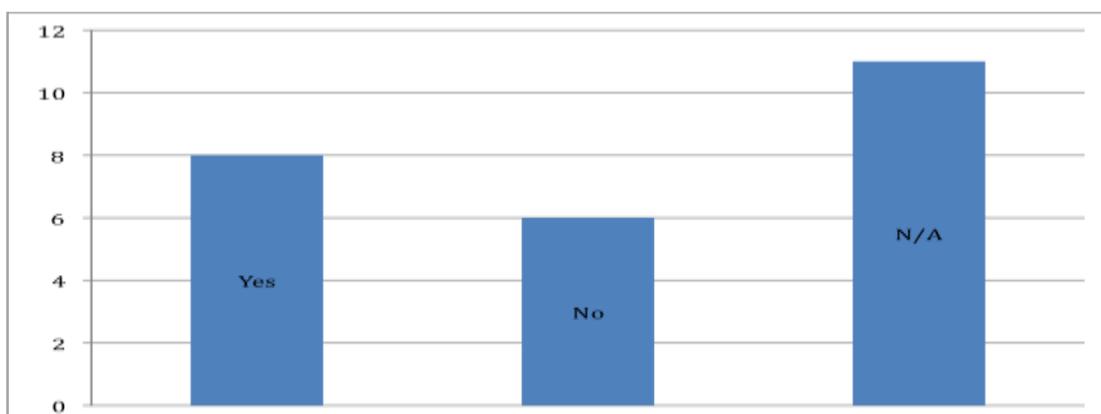


The majority of respondents of this survey (84%) did not require an interpreter service.

Of those who had use for one, three respondents claimed that their needs were met (12%) while one went with needs unmet (4%). This data cannot lead to definitive conclusions due to a lack of robust data.

Continuing in a similar vein to the previous question, this question aimed to identify whether pharmacy services accessed by Wandsworth residents were inclusive, providing information to meet the needs of a wide range of people, including those who do not speak English.

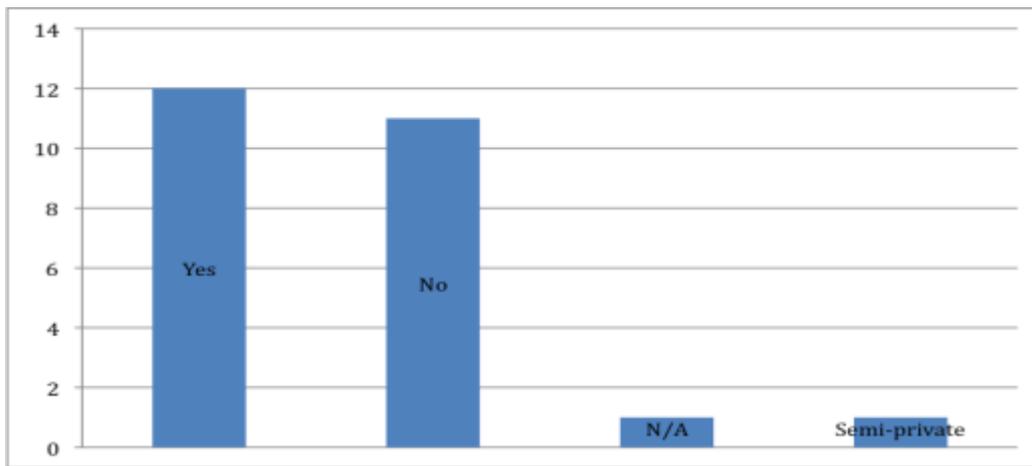
Graph 5: Does your pharmacist provide information and advice in easy to read format, or in other languages, if required?



Although this question was not applicable for almost half of all respondents (44%), the results suggest that, for almost half of those for whom the service is required, such information is inaccessible (6 respondents, 24% of overall total). However, more respondents claim an ability to access this service (8 respondents, 32% of overall total). This suggests that accessibility to more inclusive ranges of information would benefit a wider audience.

We also wanted to measure the level of privacy that service-users gain access to whilst visiting their pharmacy:

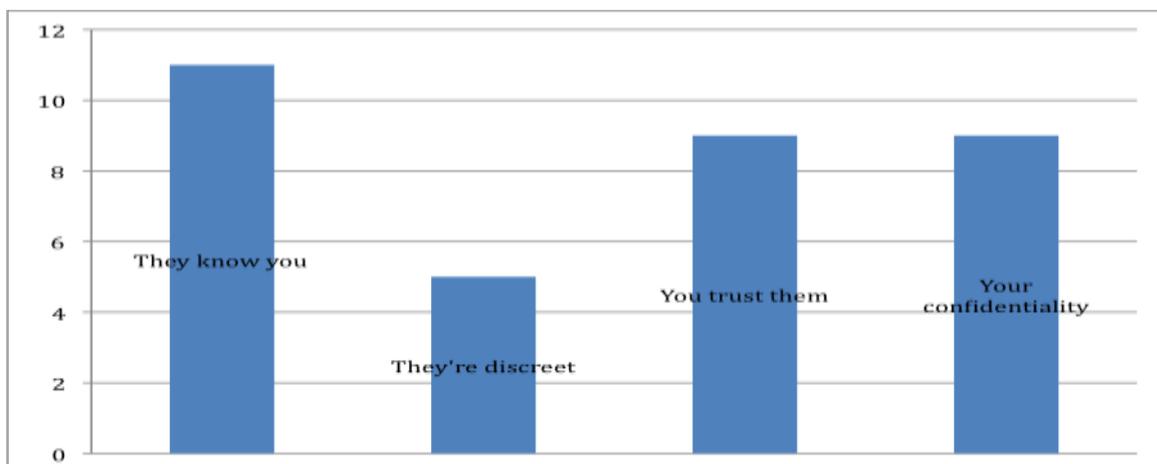
Graph 6: Does your pharmacist provide a private area to discuss your medical condition or to ask questions?



The results to this question vary. Almost half of all respondents (48%) stated that they were able to discuss their medical condition in a private area but 44% of people claimed that their experiences were different and that they did not have access to a private area to ask questions. The data suggests that qualities and standards may vary across the sector and that there is room for improvement in addressing uniformity of service provision.

To gauge the value-added that a pharmacy provides, and what level of importance the public attaches to them, we asked:

Graph 7: What is the most important thing to you when you talk to your pharmacist?



The majority of respondents claimed that the most important element when talking to their pharmacist is a certainty that the pharmacist knows them (34%) while the two values which respondents rank as joint second in importance are trust and confidentiality (26%). Of least importance to those surveyed is the pharmacist's discretion (14%). The response to this question reinforces the core tenet of the newly developed standards for pharmacy professionals - recognition that each patient must be treated as an individual.

Conclusions

We spoke to a range of people across a varied range of groups. When questioned about the pharmaceutical services they currently visit, it became very clear that the majority of respondents accessed local pharmacists and not high street or chain pharmacies and they felt that this made a massive difference in the type of service they received.

It was important to respondents that they have a pharmacist that is accessible, knows them and that they are confident in any advice they may be provided with. A few respondents suggested that the new standards could enhance communication between GP's and pharmacist and take the burden off GP's that are currently overburdened, but this also heightens a greater need for data protection.

Appendix A - The Questionnaire

The General Pharmaceutical Council have developed nine standards for pharmacy professionals. At the core of the new standards is recognition that every person must be treated as an individual.

This survey is an opportunity for patients, service users, carers, their families and friends to share with us their experience of pharmacy services.

Are you currently happy with the service you receive from your pharmacist?

Yes No *Please comment:* _____

Where do you visit a pharmacy service?

Local Pharmacy Hospital Supermarket High Street Store

Do you find it easy to speak to a pharmacist, when required?

Yes No *Please comment:* _____

Does your pharmacist provide an interpreter service, if required?

Yes No Not applicable

Please comment: _____

Does your pharmacist provide information and advice in easy to read format, or in other languages, if required?

Yes No Not applicable

Does your pharmacist provide a private area to discuss your medical condition or to ask questions?

Yes No *Please comment:* _____

What is the most important thing to you when you talk to your pharmacist?

They know you They're discreet You trust them Your confidentiality

Please comment: _____

Do you feel confident in the medication advice and information provided to you by a pharmacist?

Yes No *Please comment:* _____

Looking at the new standards, what is the most important standard to you as an individual?
