Feedback shared with us about Wandsworth health and social care services – 2016-17
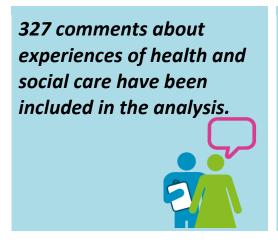
Introduction

This paper is an analysis of the experiences shared with Healthwatch Wandsworth about Wandsworth health and social care services. Comments were either shared directly with representatives of Healthwatch Wandsworth, or were submitted via online channels. Comments came directly from the service user or from their carers or representatives who gave an account of their experiences.

The comments have been analysed for key themes that service users highlighted in their feedback, whether feedback was positive, negative or neutral and what type of service was being referred to.
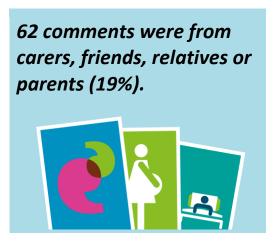
1. Executive Summary

- **Comments from service users primarily relate to GP services, Hospital Outpatient services and Mental Health services.**

- **Most comments from service users are negative.**

- **Particular issues faced are around configuration of mental health services, communication to patients and between services, appointments, waiting times, access and accessibility of services.**

- **Specific challenges were noted when making appointments at GP services, in professional to patient communication and in access to and configuration of mental health talking therapies.**
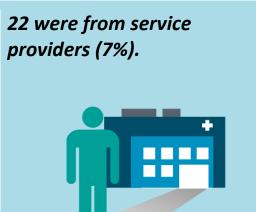
2. General statistics

327 comments about experiences of health and social care have been included in the analysis.

222 comments were from service users themselves (68%).

62 comments were from carers, friends, relatives or parents (19%).

22 were from service providers (7%).

The table below shows which services the comments were about.

Service type	Number of comments
A & E	17
Experiences across health and social care services	13
Dentist	7
GP	114
Hospital Inpatient	15
Hospital Outpatient	41
Services in the Community	22
Mental Health	67
Social Care	11
Unspecified	20
Total	327

- GP services were commented on most, over a third (35%) of all comments
- Mental health services received 20% of comments
- Hospital Outpatient services received 13% of comments

Whilst it may be understandable that there was a high number of comments about GP services, which are typically the most commonly used service for members of the public, the high prevalence of comments around mental health services are notable as discussed in further detail throughout this paper.

3. Sentiment of comments

The table below shows analysis of comments according to the sentiment of the feedback.

Sentiment	No. comments
Mixed	11
Negative	190
Neutral	43
Positive	81
Unclear	2
Total	327

- Over half of the comments (58%) were negative
- A quarter were positive
- 13% provided neutral views and the rest were mixed or unclear responses.

These statistics may not be representative of the views of health and care service users in Wandsworth as a whole. There is a possibility that people are more likely to share stories that are negative with Healthwatch Wandsworth.

The table below outlines the type of feedback given for each of the health and social care service categories.

Health/Social Care Service category	Sentiment	No respondents
A & E	Mixed	1
	Negative	5
	Neutral	4
	Positive	7
Experiences across health and social care services	Negative	4
	Neutral	6
	Positive	3
Dentist	Negative	3
	Positive	4
GP	Negative	66
	Neutral	18
	Positive	29
	Unclear	1

Hospital Inpatient	Mixed	1
	Negative	7
	Positive	7
Hospital Outpatient	Mixed	3
	Negative	20
	Neutral	2
	Positive	16
Services in the Community	Negative	13
	Neutral	2
	Positive	7
Mental Health	Mixed	5
	Negative	50
	Neutral	10
	Positive	2
Social Care	Negative	8
	Positive	2
	Unclear	1
Unspecified	Mixed	1
	Negative	14
	Neutral	1
	Positive	4

- 75% of comments on mental health services were negative, with significantly more negative comments than other services.
- 49% of comments on hospital outpatient services were negative
- 58% of comments on GP services were negative

As noted above, the most negative proportion of comments about a service was mental health services. The next most negative was social care, with 8 negative comments out of 11.

4. Key themes from comments

Often, comments were about multiple issues. We analysed the themes in the comments to identify issues the comments discussed and to draw out what the "main" issues were.

This analysis is split in to two sets of theme data. Firstly analysis of the "main" focus for each of the comments, and secondly an analysis about how often issues were raised across comments where multiple issues featured within the comments.

4.1 Main themes

The below table shows the "main" themes of the comments.

Key Theme	No comments
General Praise	55
General Complaint	51
Appointments	44
General Feedback	43
Managing Condition	18
Access	18
Mental Health	14
Referrals	13
Communication	13
Medications/Prescriptions	11
Treatments	9
Finances	8
Care	7
Diagnosis	4
Tests	3
Discharge	2
Carers	2
Housing	2
Children & Young People	1
Equality	1
Wellbeing	1
Service configuration	1
Transport	1
Social activity/isolation	1
Wait times	1
Social care	1
Registration	1
Staff	1

As can be seen from the above, the "main" theme of feedback that was most common was general praise or complaints. Appointments were the only specific issue that was a "main theme" for a significant proportion of comments.

Comments giving general praise were typically related to specific experiences of services or individual clinicians;

"A routine breast screening appointment found a lump in November 2006. I was operated on in January 2007. All the radiotherapy and follow up was wonderful. This year, I thought I detected something else in my breast. I was referred back to the Rose Clinic at St. George's within a week, and had a very thorough examination. Happily, there is nothing to worry about. My GP is very supportive and listens and advises."

"My experience relates to having a tooth implant and the initial installation of the stump. This is a painful process but my dentist took

great care to ensure that I didn't suffer very much. It has been successfully installed."

However a small number were broader, making wider comments about services in Wandsworth or particular parts of the borough in general:

"We have very good and accessible local services in Tooting, both GPs and St. George's."

General complaints were also typically service or clinician specific comments:

"I went to my GP to speak to a doctor about a personal problem. I felt that she made me feel judged and uncomfortable rather than creating what I thought should be a professional environment."

"The A&E ward was dirty. On the bed/trolley, their was blood, dried dark brown blood on the walls and the trolleys were filthy."

A small number of general complaints were broader, relating to challenges for people with specific conditions or needs, or commenting on services in general.

"Mental Health: Early interventions and support - There should be earlier and more visible support for mental health – particularly for men who might not seek help due to the stigma around mental health."

"The NHS is a top-heavy organisation; it needs less management and more front-line services."

Comments regarding appointments tended to focus on the challenges service users faced booking appointments with GPs. Many of these comments focussed on frustrations about being unable to make short notice appointments.

"It is near on impossible to get a GP appointment for the same day."

"People felt frustrated that they couldn't always get an appointment with their GP. One person said she starts calling at 8am and when she gets through at 8.10am she is told that no appointments are left and she would have to either wait or use another NHS service."

However, a number of comments highlighted some of the challenges around managing demand on GP services.

"The current GP system allows for you to book an appointment within 48hours. However it was felt that you should be able to book an appointment further in advance."

And some comments were positive.

4.2 Frequency of issues across comments

Most comments mentioned two or more themes. Looking at the frequency of these themes as issues within the comments can provide further insight in to the particular issues. The below shows the six most frequently raised issues.

Theme	No. times raised
The way health and social care services work as a system	111
Communication	73
Complaint	60
Wait times	57
Appointment	53
Access and accessibility	50

Excluding respondents who raised specific complaints, the five most frequently raised issues related to:

- The way the health and social care services work as a system (raised by a third of respondents)
- Communication (raised by 22%)
- Waiting times (raised by 17%)
- Appointments (raised by 16%)
- Access/accessibility (raised by 15%).

4.2.1. The way health and social care services work as a system

The table below shows the breakdown of issues mentioned in comments about the way the health and social care system works:

Type of service	No. comments
A & E	5
Cross system	5
GP	28
Hospital Inpatient	3
Hospital Outpatient	9
Services in the Community	7
Mental Health	50
Social Care	3
Unspecified	1
Total	111

A high number of people (45%) who talked about the way health and social care services work as a system commented on mental health services (50 of 111). In

total there were only 67 comments about mental health services. Clearly, a change to the way services are organised is high on people's list of priorities.

Sentiment	No. comments
Mixed	5
Negative	71
Neutral	22
Positive	13
Total	**111**

Nearly two thirds (64%) of comments about the way services work as a system were negative and only 12% were positive.

The focus of the comments varied, some were about cross-system issues:

"When people seek help, support should be immediate. It takes a lot to make the decision to seek help – not receiving it immediately may put people off and their condition could escalate."

Other comments were specific to certain services (predominantly mental health services)

"[the service user] also noted that Springfield Hospital used to use an in-house team for talking therapies, but this has now been contracted out which seems a much more expensive service."

Talking therapies as a mental health service, was raised by a number of respondents commenting on the way the health and care system works. Some flagged cost, whilst others talked about waiting times and lack of choice:

"One person was discharged from Springfield Hospital and has been waiting for "Talking Therapies" for over a year. He said he luckily had support of his family to help him through however, he knows of many people who are alone with no family and waiting a year for therapy could cause someone to relapse and go back into Hospital."

"Commissioning - It was reported that many services for mental health are closing and limited resources are being put into the provision. This means that those that are still operating have long waiting lists and limitations of what they are able to offer."

This issue clearly causes frustration and suggests there is a need to review access to talking therapies and waiting times.

The small number of positive comments about the way the health and care system work as a system were typically about a number of services or elements of a service functioning well together.

"St. George's Hospital Cardio Rehab. Following heart surgery, in February 2016, I needed guidance and support getting back into an exercise programme. The rehab course did just what I needed and got me exercising gently and safely. It was the first step and there are a lot more to go, but I feel more confident that I will get back to my old self (2 or 3 gym sessions and one or two 3 mile runs every week). The exercise programme was supplemented with health, lifestyle and diet advice. All of the staff running the programme were professional, friendly and supportive. Perhaps, most important of all, it was fun."

4.2.2. Communication

The below table shows a breakdown of the services comments about communication were related to:

Service type	No. comments
A & E	4
Cross system	1
Dentist	2
GP	33
Hospital Inpatient	2
Hospital Outpatient	16
Services in the Community	5
Mental Health	6
Social Care	1
Unspecified	3
Total	**73**

- GP services were the most with regards to communication, making up 45% of comments (33 of 73).
- Hospital outpatient services was the next frequently mentioned service relating to communication issues, with 22% (16 of 73) of comments.

Communication- sentiment	No. comments
Mixed	2
Negative	48
Neutral	6
Positive	17
Total	73

Two thirds of responses talking about communication were negative, slightly higher than the 58% of all comments that were negative. 23% of comments about communication were positive.

The focus of comments about communication tended to either be about specific service experiences:

"A doctor [GP] was reported as being unsympathetic towards a patient who attended the clinic due to him not complying with his medication. When the family asked what they could do about it, the Dr was reported as saying "what's the worst that could happen – he is old already?""

"One person was seeing a gynaecologist at St Helier Hospital [outpatient department] and was asked if there was any way she could be pregnant. She was 64 and had a hysterectomy in her 30s. She felt very embarrassed and thought if the consultant had read her notes, he could have saved her this embarrassment."

Other comments (both positive and negative) focussed on broader issues about how services engage with patients, provide them with information and communicate with other parts of the system:

"I joined the Brocklebank GP recently and I have been so impressed so far with the way they communicate with me. Already, I've had a letter to book a health check and a phone call to verify some details. This is amazing. It's early days yet, but so far this GP is ticking all the boxes."

"GPs do not follow the care advice that is delivered when given by a specialist. There is a need for better joined up care between primary and secondary services so that the patient receives the best outcome."

Where comments were positive, service users particularly focussed on the role of professionals in keeping them engaged, and in particular, reassured through what were often difficult or worrying experiences.

"I was going through a terrible ordeal and I have a supportive doctor [GP] who guided me through the process by not only explaining clearly what was happening or going to happen but also comforting me as I found out my results. They were fantastic."

"One person's grandchild fell down from the top of the stairs down to the bottom. Her mother called 999 and an ambulance arrived within 5 minutes and informed them that the air ambulance was in the sky waiting for them, in case the traffic was severe. Her grandchild was seen in the ambulance immediately and taken to St George's Hospital. The paramedics made sure that everything was explained to the family and that they should be aware the A&E team in St Georges will be waiting ready for their arrival and it could be hectic. Luckily her grandchild was fine, just bruised but she was very impressed with the compassion and professionalism of all staff involved."

"I went into hospital [outpatient department] to have my tonsils removed. They made me feel comfortable and explained that I needed to have my

tonsils out because I had tonsilitis. After the operation, I stayed for a while and they let me know when I would be leaving. The people that operated on me were really good."

Providing reassurance and engaging service users were key elements of positive responses from service users. This indicates that service users need service providers to focus communication and on reassuring them and ensuring that they are informed and engaged in their care every step of the way, even for acute and emergency care.

4.2.3 Waiting times

The below shows which services comments about waiting times related to:

Wait times- service type	No. comments
A & E	6
Dentist	2
GP	24
Hospital Outpatient	10
Services in the Community	3
Mental Health	9
Unspecified	3
Total	57

Among comments about waiting times:
- GP services were mentioned by most people 42% (24 of 57)
- Followed by hospital outpatient services,18% (10 of 57).

Wait times- sentiment	No. comments
Mixed	2
Negative	36
Neutral	6
Positive	13
Grand Total	57

63% of comments about waiting times were negative and 23% of the comments were positive.

Aside from appointment waiting times (see more information about feedback on appointments 3.2.4 below) waiting times for more specialist was most frequently raised as an issue. These comments related to a range of services.

"Awaiting a referral for specialist care [outpatients department] can often take a long time and there needs to be a better system in place to manage this."

"There are often long wait times for specialist clinics or support services [community service] for children and young people."

"Improvements need to be made to the referral system as GPs delay referring patients on for further care."

Other comments relating to waiting times were about being seen at particular services and the frustration this caused.

"It was noted that the queues for the pharmacy at St. Georges are usually very long and people could wait up to two hours before they received their prescription."

"The waiting time at St George's A&E department was very long and there is a lack of communication between staff and patients on how long you have to wait until you're seen."

The small number of positive responses tended to focus on service users being able to get appointments when they needed to.

"Overall there was a positive response for people being able to access their GP. People noted that they had not encountered any problems and could usually get an appointment on the day and when required."

4.2.4. Appointments

Appointments	No. comments
Dentist	2
GP	40
Hospital Outpatient	6
In the Community	2
Unspecified	3
Grand Total	53

Comments about appointments predominantly related to GP services, (40 of 52). This is higher than the 35% of comments that were about GP services.

Appointments	No. comments
Mixed	1
Negative	31
Neutral	8
Positive	13
Grand Total	53

Comments about appointments were mostly negative (58%) and only a quarter of comments about appointments were positive (25%).

Comments around appointment issues have been highlighted above.

Looking at comments about wait times and appointments together, it is clear there is an issue with certain GP service appointment systems. However, comments did not reveal how some practices might manage appointments successfully. There would be a benefit in identifying this and sharing good practice in managing appointments across surgeries in the borough.

4.2.5 Accessibility and Access

The table below shows the services comments about accessibility and access related to.

Accessibility and Access	No. comments
A & E	4
Cross system	2
GP	24
Hospital Outpatient	3
In the Community	6
Mental Health	11
Grand Total	50

- 48% of comments on accessibility and access referred to GP services, which is higher than the 35% of all comments which were about GP services.
- 22% of service users provided feedback about to accessibility and access were referring to Mental Health services.

Access and accessibility	No. comments
Negative	32
Neutral	8
Positive	10
Grand Total	50

A slightly higher proportion of comments about access and accessibility were negative (64%) than was the case for comments as a whole (58%). A slightly lower proportion of comments around access and accessibility were positive (20%) as was the case for comments as a whole (25%).

Notably, some comments focussed on whether service users could actually access a service.

"It was reported by an individual that to access a GP when needed, you have to "play the game" which involves stating specific symptoms in order to get an appointment. It was felt that this was done as GPs discriminate against certain patients as they chose who and when to respond to individuals."
- Service user comment about a GP service

"There is a need for more support groups for families who have children with autism / ADHD."
- Service user comment about an In the Community service

"There were concerns raised that the GP was not visiting the most sick and vulnerable at home despite the patient not being able to attend the GP practice."
- Service user comment about a GP service.

The home visit issue from the comment above, appeared in a number of responses with concerns that they were hard to organise.

Other comments around access and accessibility referred to the 'set-up' of services for accessibility.

"St. George's needs to build multi-storey car parking. It costs me £2.50 to park when I go for a blood test, which only lasts about 10 minutes."

"St. George's is an excellent hospital. I go there 3 times a week, it is really convenient and accessible and the clinicians are very good."

"The general environment with GP surgeries should be disability friendly."