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Healthwatch **Together**

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria
and Lancashire working in partnership

About Healthwatch Together

Healthwatch was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act, 2012. Healthwatch are the independent consumer voice for health and social care, listening to the views of local people with the aim to make services work for those who use them.

When working across Lancashire and South Cumbria, four local Healthwatch come together to form 'Healthwatch Together', working in partnership across the footprint. Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen, Healthwatch Blackpool, Healthwatch Cumbria and Healthwatch Lancashire each operate in their own geographical area and are their own unique entity, providing a local approach to community engagement.

Healthwatch Cumbria did not take part in this particular project.

Introduction and Context

Healthwatch Together are working with colleagues from Public Health, NHS England, Blackpool Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to hear about local peoples experiences of accessing community pharmacy services.

Community pharmacies, also known as 'chemists', can be found across Lancashire e.g. on the high street, in supermarkets, local housing estates and also online.

The feedback and experiences will help shape developments and feed directly into the 'Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment' (PNA), which happens every three years. The PNA has been delayed for two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of the PNA is to review community pharmacy services within an area and identify any areas of unmet need. This will then shape improvements and further developments of pharmacy services going forward.

To find out more see:

Blackburn with Darwen- <https://bit.ly/3FVjr5Y>

Blackpool- <https://bit.ly/3mTAr4W>

Lancashire- <https://bit.ly/32FMX1i>

The three areas referred to in this report are the areas covered by the three Health and Wellbeing Boards. The Health and Wellbeing Board are required to consult with stakeholders, such as Healthwatch, when writing the PNA. As a result, Healthwatch Together are ensuring patient experience of community pharmacy services is at the heart of the assessment.

Each local Healthwatch were responsible for engaging with patients within their patch. The goal was to gather qualitative and quantitative feedback to influence the PNA, highlighting trends in accessing community pharmacy services.

Healthwatch Together would like to thank all those who took the time to share their experiences of their local pharmacy. We are extremely appreciative to all of the people that chose to take part in and support our survey.

Executive Summary

Healthwatch Together have collected feedback from residents across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire to understand patient use and preferences relating to community pharmacy services. Through distributing an online survey, Healthwatch Together engaged with 229 people who have provided the insight that features in this report.

Key Messages:

The most frequent reasons given by patients for visiting a pharmacy were:

- To get a prescription for myself
- To get a prescription for someone else
- To buy medicines for myself

This visit usually occurs monthly, with most patients stating they don't have a preference on the day they visit, or preferring weekdays in general. Of those who responded, 51% chose between 12pm – 8pm as the most convenient time to use their pharmacy. 25% of overall respondents did not have a preference. Responses suggest most people use the same pharmacy all of the time, and this tends to be the closest and/or most convenient pharmacy.

The key factors that have been shown to influence people's choice of pharmacy were:

- Close to my home
- Close to my GP surgery
- It is easy to get to the pharmacy
- It is easy to park at the pharmacy

Most patients travel to the pharmacy by car, with this journey typically taking between 5 and 15 minutes.

Overall, the majority of respondents rated their pharmacy excellent or good, with only four rating it as poor.

Methodology

Healthwatch Together produced a questionnaire, with input from key stakeholders from the local authority and health and wellbeing boards, in order to collect data and insights. This survey was distributed by Healthwatch Together via all social media channels and with local third sector partners.

Local Healthwatch	Total number of respondents
Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen	47 respondents
Healthwatch Blackpool	79 respondents
Healthwatch Lancashire	102 respondents
Not specified	1 respondent
	229 respondents

Postcodes per locality

Participants were asked for the first half of their postcode. The following tables display this information divided into each area:

Blackburn with Darwen	Total number
BB1	8
BB2	18
BB3	19
BL7	2

Blackpool	Total number
FY1	8
FY2	24
FY3	13
FY4	24
FY5	10

Lancashire	Total number
BB1	2
BB10	1
BB11	2
BB4	3
BB5	2
BB7	2
BB9	3
BL7	1
FY5	8

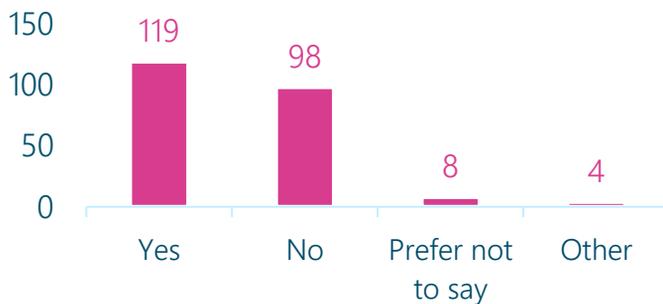
Postcodes per locality

Lancashire (continued)	Total number
FY6	7
FY7	4
FY8	10
L39	1
LA1	5
LA4	2
LA6	1
PR1	1
PR2	6
PR25	5
PR3	6
PR4	12
PR5	6
PR6	6
PR7	2
WN8	4

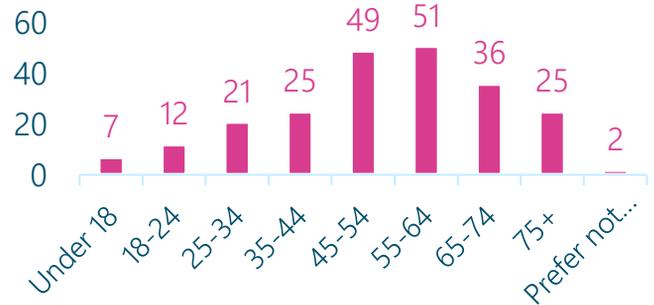
Demographics

The survey was completed by 229 respondents across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire. The graphs below display the demographic information of those who took part.

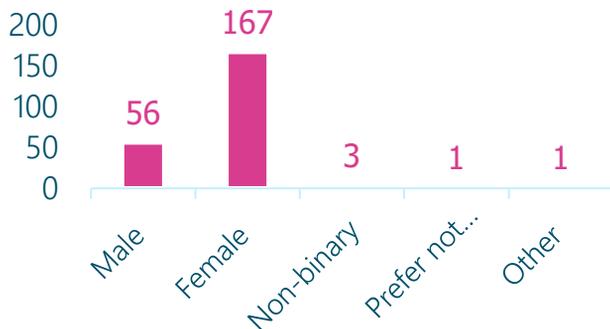
Do you have a long term health condition or disability?



What is your age?



What is your gender?



What is your ethnicity?	Total number
Asian/Asian British	5
Black/Black British	1
White/White British	214
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	4
Other	3
Rather not say	2

What is your sexual orientation?	Total number
Heterosexual or straight	195
Bisexual	5
Gay or lesbian	12
Pansexual	0
Asexual	0
Not sure	1
Prefer not to say	15
Other	1

Demographics per locality

On the whole, the demographics within each area followed a similar pattern. Any differences have been set out below.

The age category that participants most frequently belonged to differed within each area:

Blackburn with Darwen - 65-74 age group.

Blackpool - 45-54 age group.

Lancashire – 55-64 age group.

In Blackpool, 26.6% of respondents were below the age of 35, in comparison to 8.5% in Blackburn with Darwen and 14.7% in Lancashire.

When looking at gender, each area had one non-binary participant, and more female respondents than males. With that being said, Blackburn with Darwen had a higher proportion of male participants within their area than Blackpool and Lancashire.

The sexual orientation of participants was fairly consistent within each area. 75% of the participants who responded gay or lesbian resided in Blackpool, and 80% of bisexual respondents live in Lancashire.

Each area had predominantly White/White British respondents. Blackburn with Darwen had the highest proportion of Asian/Asian British participants, with 4 out of the 5 in total living in this area.

Lancashire (55.8%) and Blackburn with Darwen (55.3%) had a higher percentage of participants with a long-term condition or disability than Blackpool (44.3%).

Survey insights

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

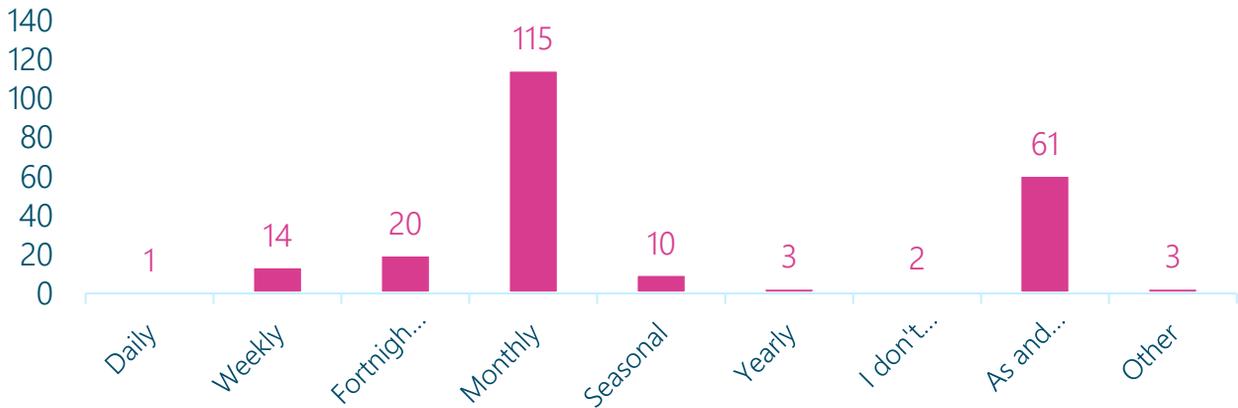
The total number of responses are presented below, alongside the proportion of each response out of the total for each area.

Why do you usually visit a pharmacy? Please tick any or all that apply.	Total number	Blackburn with Darwen (%)	Blackpool (%)	Lancashire (%)
To get a prescription for myself	173	28.7	32.8	31.5
To get a prescription for someone else	101	14.8	18.3	19.9
I don't, someone else gets my prescription for me	4	0	1.1	0.4
To get advice for myself	59	11.5	7.2	12.7
To get advice for someone else	20	6.6	3.9	2.0
I don't, someone else gets advice for me	2	0.8	0	0.4
To buy medicines for myself	86	18.0	13.9	15.5
To buy medicines for someone else	48	7.4	10.0	8.4
I don't, someone else buys medicines for me	0	0	0	0
I visit because I have been referred to the pharmacy from another service e.g. NHS 111/GP	7	1.6	1.7	0.8
To get another service the pharmacy offers	18	4.1	3.9	2.4
I don't visit a pharmacy as I use an online pharmacy service	3	0	0.6	0.8
I don't visit a pharmacy as I use my local pharmacy delivery service	27	5.7	4.4	4.4
Other	7	0.8	2.2	0.8

Other: "I don't use a pharmacy at all really", "For Covid test kits", "Person should be able to get them delivered but the pharmacy seems to believe that doesn't apply to young disabled, so I have to collect for them instead", "To get the Covid vaccines and booster", "I have a coffee at the café in the pharmacy", "Don't currently use it for anything", "I go in if I miss the delivery slot".

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

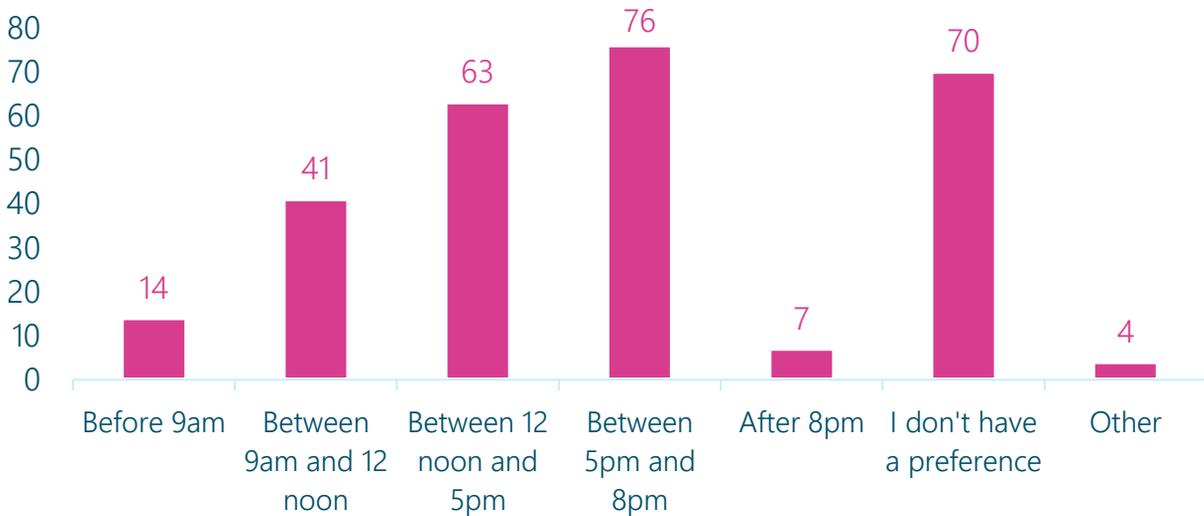
How often do you use a pharmacy?



Other: Two people use the pharmacy bi-monthly. The other answered *"often when I need to."*

Participants most frequently access a pharmacy monthly across each of the three areas.

What time is the most convenient for you to use a pharmacy? Please tick any or all that apply.



Other: *"The later time if a weekday", "Anytime on a Saturday", "Online order straight from GP", "I try and go when it's quiet".*

The most convenient time to use a pharmacy varied depending on the area:

Blackburn with Darwen – Between 12 noon and 5pm

Blackpool – Between 5pm and 8pm

Lancashire – I don't have a preference

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

What day is the most convenient for you to use the pharmacy? Please tick any or all that apply.	Total number
Monday	14
Tuesday	13
Wednesday	17
Thursday	21
Friday	20
Saturday	21
Sunday	11
Weekdays in general	69
Weekends in general	29
I don't have a preference	101
Other	2

Other: "Quiet times if I visit", "My pharmacy is closed at weekends which would be more convenient."

People residing in Blackpool and Lancashire most frequently do not have a preference, whereas participants in Blackburn with Darwen specified they prefer weekdays in general to use the pharmacy.

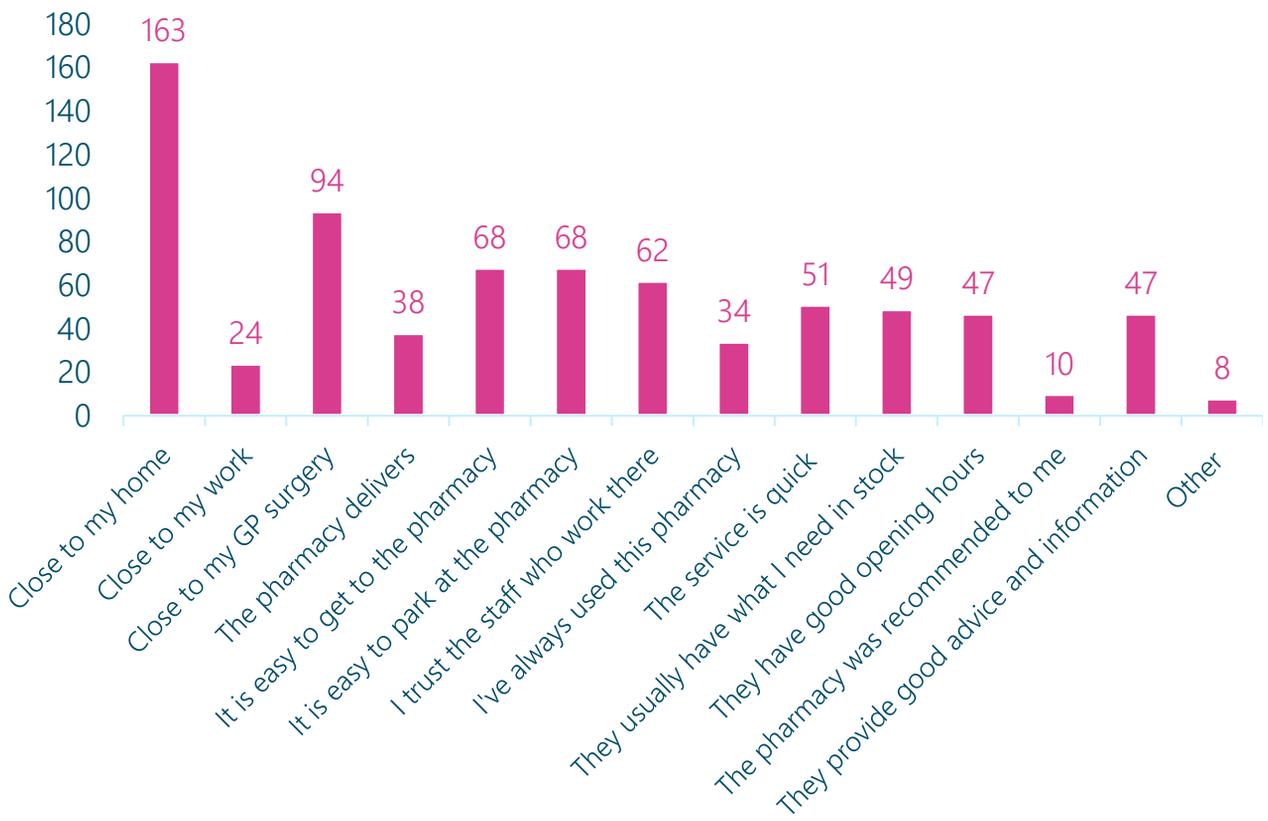
Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

Please select one of the following that best applies to you:	Total number
I use the same pharmacy all of the time	138
I use different pharmacies but visit one most often	75
I use different pharmacies all of the time	12
I access online pharmacy services	1
I never use a pharmacy	2
Other	1

Other: "Mostly the same pharmacy."

The pattern in responses is consistent across each area.

We would like to know what influences your choice of pharmacy. Please tick all the statements that apply to you.

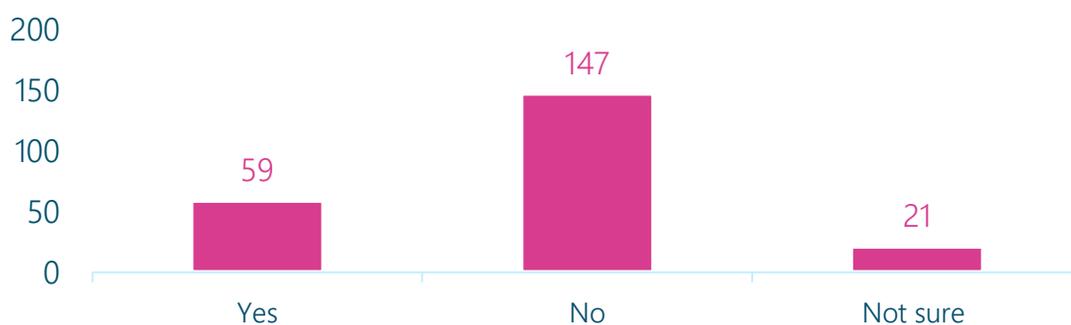


Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

Other: *"My friend works there so I know I will get my medication every day", "They are an independent pharmacy and are more likely to get hold of my medication easily", "The staff are friendly, knowledgeable and efficient", "Close to my granddaughter's house", "As we are over 80 we rely on a delivery monthly", "They do a blister pack for me each month", "Offer free home delivery", "It's my designated pharmacy for electronic prescriptions (so I can't go elsewhere)."*

The data suggests certain factors have more of an influence on choice of pharmacy depending upon the area. In Blackburn with Darwen, having a pharmacy where it is easy to park appears to be more important than it is in the other areas. Similarly, in Blackpool, a pharmacy being close to home is much more important than the other factors influencing this decision. Participants in Lancashire place more emphasis on the staff and service within the pharmacy than those in the other two areas.

Is there a more convenient and/or closer pharmacy that you don't use?



Those who answered 'Yes' were asked for further details as to why they do not use this pharmacy. The following themes were identified from the responses:

Parking

Ten respondents mentioned issues with parking impacting upon their decision to use a different pharmacy.

"The lack of parking makes it more difficult to use the pharmacy closest to my home."

"The nearest one to me doesn't have parking and is on a main road so not convenient."

"I cannot park near to this pharmacy and I have limited mobility."

Proximity to GP Surgery

Twelve participants prefer to use the pharmacy that is closer to or linked with their GP Practice.

"I used one that is within my doctor's surgery so it's easier."

"Current pharmacy is linked with my GP surgery so easy to sort any mistakes."

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

Positive features of current pharmacy

Twelve responses referenced an element of their current pharmacy that encourages them to continue using this service. Five of those participants simply stated it is the familiarity of their chemist that prevents them from using a closer or more convenient pharmacy, with quotes such as *"I know and trust the service I get with my usual pharmacy"* and *"I've been using the same one for years and I trust them"* exemplifying this.

Other factors included:

"The opening hours are more convenient."

"I find the staff more friendly at the pharmacy I visit and they open later so can go after work."

"Prefer independently owned pharmacies."

"The staff are friendly and knowledgeable."

Staff manner

Nine people stated the staff deter them from using the pharmacy closer and/or more convenient to them.

"Unhelpful staff. I don't feel welcome. They always make me feel I am bothering them if I have questions."

"The staff are extremely slow in serving you."

"The front end staff are curt and rude, even though the pharmacists are not."

"Can't understand the staff when they speak."

"The staff there never smiled at you, didn't apologise the item wasn't in stock even though it was a regular item and seemed very disinterested in the customers."

Issues relating to medication

Six participants referred to problems when collecting their prescription.

"When they dealt with my prescriptions which I have monthly, there was always a mistake."

"Required items often not in stock... Prescriptions sent electronically from GP surgery but never ready when customer goes to collect- always told it will be 45 minutes wait and to shop in the ASDA store whilst waiting."

"Out of stock medication on a regular basis."

"Each time I went in to collect my electronic prescription, they would tell me that they would have to order it in causing me to have to go back another day."

Features of the pharmacy

For some people, it is clear that there are certain elements to the service that a pharmacy offers in order for them to use it. Two people said *"It does not deliver"*, showing this can affect people's choice of pharmacy. Two people mentioned a lack of privacy in the pharmacy closest to them, whilst for three participants the times and days in which the pharmacy is open are important – *"because they don't open 7 days a week"* and *"their opening hours are limited."*

Other responses included:

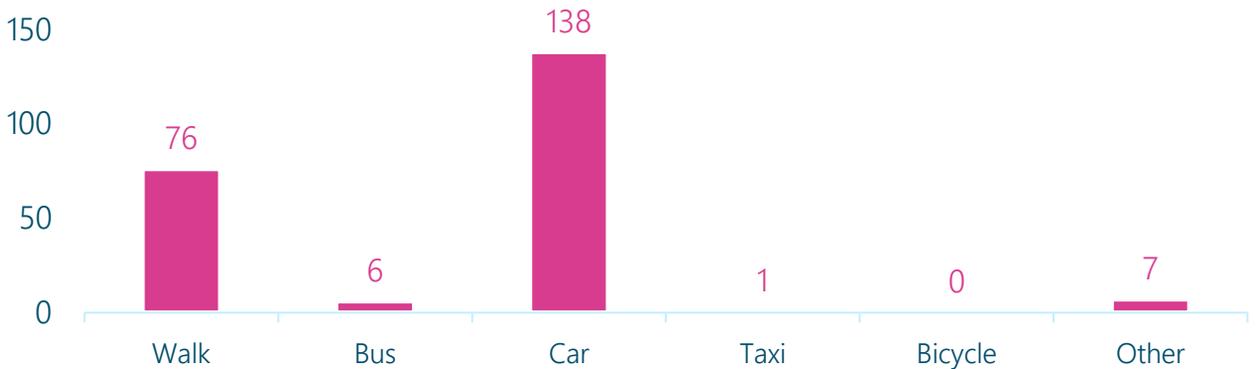
"They don't do the monthly trays."

"There are no windows so sitting in artificial light lowers my mood considerably."

"My local pharmacy went through a period of uncertain opening times."

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

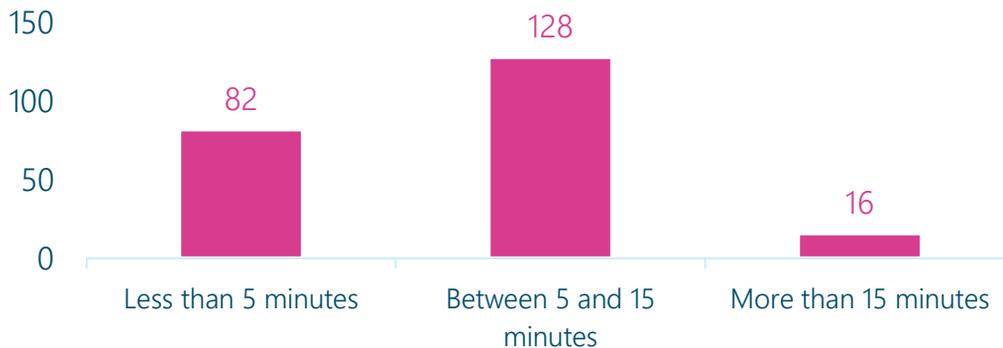
How do you usually travel to a pharmacy?



Other: "Get a delivery service", "Electric wheelchair", "I don't because they deliver to me. I can't leave the house", "Dependent which pharmacy I am going to", "Wheelchair", "Mobility scooter if I have to go", "I don't because it is delivered".

The most common response in each area was car, followed by walk. None of the respondents in Blackburn with Darwen selected bus.

How long does it usually take you to travel to a pharmacy?



The largest proportion of the less than 5 minutes responses were within the Blackpool area. A higher percentage of Lancashire's responses were between 5 and 15 minutes in comparison to the other two areas.

Community Pharmacy Survey Feedback

How would you rate your overall experience accessing pharmacy services?	Total number
Excellent	94
Good	98
Satisfactory	31
Poor	4
Very poor	0

It appears that participants in Blackburn with Darwen have a more positive overall experience than other areas, as the most frequent response within this area was excellent. In Blackpool and Lancashire, the most common answer was good, with all but two of the satisfactory responses also being within these two areas. Each of the four participants who stated their overall experience was poor resided in Lancashire.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Healthwatch Together has gathered patient experiences and preferences relating to community pharmacy services, in order to inform the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment for Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire.

Of the feedback collected, it appears that overall, patients are satisfied with the service that their pharmacy provides. We are extremely grateful to those who chose to share their feedback that features in the report.

Healthwatch Together will continue to give local people the opportunity to share their experiences of health and care. We will make sure NHS leaders and decision makers use feedback to improve care across Lancashire.

Stakeholder Response

Community Pharmacy Lancashire would like to thank the teams at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen, Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Lancashire in producing this combined report "*Views on the Community Pharmacy services – informing the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022*".

We are also indebted to the residents who access pharmacy services across the three localities and who engaged with the online survey to provide the insights that feature in this report. We are grateful for the clear and informed picture they have given us, and this will help identify what can be done differently to meet their needs. It is clear from the report that the respondents to the survey came from a broad range of the populations of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire.

We would like to acknowledge that this report, and that of writing the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment were conducted as we were coming out of many COVID restrictions, and as such the pharmacy teams were adapting to the changing ways of working and service provision that the pharmacies had been working with during the pandemic, and to that end some of the provisions observed were in the process of changing.

We are proud that this survey has shown that the vast majority of respondents said they were happy with the service they received, and we note the comments made by the small number of respondent's resident in Lancashire who stated that their overall experience was poor. We are not surprised to find that the majority of people chose their pharmacy due to convenience, using the same pharmacy each time they need a service. It is important to stress here, the people have complete freedom of choice as to which pharmacy they use, and are able to change where their prescription is sent to very easily should they choose to do so. It is clear from the respondents that the form of transport to the pharmacy is by use of car, followed by walking. It was also clear that respondents were using pharmacies that were close to home or convenient to access in their daily lives. Community Pharmacies are the most easily accessible healthcare professionals, and it is good to see that this is a valued aspect of using pharmacy services.

Over three quarters of the respondents said they visited their pharmacy to get a prescription for themselves or someone else, and many were in the pharmacy to get advice. It is interesting to note that only a small number said they went to the pharmacy to access other services, and this highlights the need for pharmacies to better highlight and communicate the range of other NHS services they provide to help support patients. This applies to both local and national communication to raise patient's awareness of the medicines and healthcare support services that are available.

There were some comments around how we could improve be that about staff manner, issues relating to medication and features of the pharmacy itself. The pharmacies and their teams work hard to offer the best service they can to their patients; despite funding cuts, national issues in obtaining some medicines to name two recent challenges to the teams. They try, and will continue to try very hard to minimise the impact that these have on their patients, and to support the health and wellbeing of the communities that they too live and work in.