

Report of Healthwatch Pharmacy User Survey

Healthwatch conducted a pharmacy user survey for members of the public between April and July 2022. The questions asked in the survey are given at the end of this report. The survey had an excellent response rate with 310 responses received from members of the public via a survey on the council website

Most patients who participated in the survey visited a pharmacy at least once every three months.

Option	Total	Percent
At least once a week	34	10.97%
At least once a month	158	50.97%
At least once every three months	75	24.19%
At least once every six months	17	5.48%
Others	16	4.39%

We asked if COVID had changed the way they used pharmacies with the majority (80%) saying they used the pharmacy about the same amount. A further 6% said they now relied on home deliveries and 1.5% had moved to internet pharmacies. 6% of participants said that they used pharmacies more frequently.

When asked if they used the same pharmacy almost 80% of respondents said they always or usually used the same pharmacy.

Option	Total	Percent
Always	143	46.13%
Usually	122	39.35%
No	45	14.52%

When asked how they got to their usual pharmacy the majority walked or went by car.

Option	Total	Percent
On foot	132	42.58%
Public transport	14	4.52%
Car or taxi	181	58.39%
Other (please specify)	8	2.26%

When asked how easy it was to get to their usual pharmacy on foot

Option	Total	Percent
Very Easy	125	40.9%
Easy	90	29.4%
Difficult	48	15.7%
Very Difficult	38	12.4%
Don't Know	5	1.6%

38% of respondents said that it was easy to get to their usual pharmacy by public transport, 36% said it would be difficult or very difficult.

When asked to describe their usual pharmacy the majority described it as a High Street pharmacy. There may have been some confusion with regard to the definition of a High Street pharmacy, as the explanations in the “other” section included village pharmacy, and independent pharmacy. Likewise, some pharmacies are co-located with doctors surgeries but are separate businesses, and not dispensing doctor establishments.

Option	Total	Percent
High street pharmacy	158	51.0%
Pharmacy in supermarket	60	19.4%
Pharmacy in doctors surgery	84	27.1%
Internet pharmacy	5	1.7%
Other (please specify)	27	8.71%

One fifth of respondents (20%) considered themselves to have a disability. Of the 61 people who answered the question about wheelchair access, 30 said that there was adequate wheelchair access and 9 said that access was not adequate. 18 respondents also said that parking for those with disabilities was inadequate.

When asked about provisions made for those with sensory impairments, 8 respondents considered that their needs were catered for, and 4 considered that their needs were not addressed by pharmacies. Similar response rates were given for those suffering mental health issues and those with learning difficulties.

When asked about the availability of interpretation services, most respondents did not know if these were available. All pharmacies have access to interpretation services through an NHS England contract.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	11	3.8%
No	31	10.7%
Don't know	248	85.2%
Not Answered	20	

When asked if there was a pharmacy nearer to them that they did not use, 40% of respondents did not use their nearest pharmacy. There were 97 responses to this question detailing why the respondent did not use the nearest pharmacy. These included

Option	Total	Percent
Rudeness of staff	20	
Shop too busy/lack staff	17	
Opening hours	20	
Reliability	14	
More convenient to use other pharmacy	13	
Lack of stock	13	

Parking	3	
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When asked which day of the week they usually visited a pharmacy, more respondents favoured Thursday and Friday, but footfall was similar on each day of the week except Sunday.

Option	Total	Percent
Monday	42	14.5
Tuesday	33	11.4%
Wednesday	49	16.9%
Thursday	54	18.6%
Friday	55	18.9%
Saturday	50	17.2%
Sunday	7	2.41%

Most respondents were happy with the opening hours of their usual pharmacy, although 11% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Some did make the point that although were happy with the opening hours, that was because they were retired. They could see that opening hours might be an issue for people who worked during the day. Several people commented that it was an issue if the pharmacist was not available at lunchtime, although they did value the longer opening hours in supermarket pharmacies.

Although 42% of respondents had needed something when their usual pharmacy was closed, one third waited until the pharmacy was open and two thirds went to another pharmacy. Seven people went to a walk in centre, and two said they went to a hospital. Several used NHS 111 to get advice in what to do.

Also within the feedback there is a rising number of concerns raised by patients using pharmacies that do not process the prescription on site, with complaints of an increasing number of errors and very long times needed to get their prescriptions from the base pharmacy.

About 80% of respondents were under 65 and therefore of working age, with only 20% being “elderly”. The respondents were 80% female, and 94% identified as white.