

Q4 Patient Experience Report

Healthwatch Lewisham
Jan – Mar 2023



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Layout of the report

This report is broken down into five key sections:

- Quarterly snapshot
- Experiences of GP Practices
- Experiences of Hospital Services
- Experiences of Dental Services
- Experiences of 'Other' Services

GPs, Hospitals and Dental Services have been given dedicated sections as we ask tailored questions about these services when carrying out engagement. These are the top 3 services we usually receive most feedback about. Each of these sections highlight good practice, areas of improvement and recommendations.

This report functions as a standardised general overview of what Lewisham residents have told us within the last three months. Additional deep dives relating to the different sections are dependent on additional capacity.

Please note that this is a new report design which was developed as part of our review of the Patient Experience Programme. Therefore there will be gaps in data for Q1 and Q2 of the 2022/23 financial year.

Introduction

Patient Experience Programme

Healthwatch Lewisham is your local health and social care champion. Through our Patient Experience Programme, we hear the experiences of residents and people who have used health and care services in our borough.

They tell us what is working well and what could be improved allowing us to share local issues with decision makers who have the power to make changes.

Every three months we produce this report in order to raise awareness about patient experience and share recommendations on how services could be improved.

Methodology



Carrying out engagement at **local community hotspots** such as GPs, hospitals and libraries



Encouraging conversations on **social media** and gathering **online reviews**



Providing promotional materials and surveys in **accessible formats**



Training volunteers to support engagement across the borough allowing us to reach a wider range of people and communities

Being independent helps people to trust our organisation and give honest feedback which they might not always share with local services.

Between January and March 2023 we continued to develop our PEP by :

- Developing a new Patient Experience Report which will be used in the next financial year

Please note that we have included experiences of University Hospital Lewisham outpatient services which were gathered as part of a commissioned piece in partnership with Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust.

Q4 Snapshot

This section provides a summary of the number of experiences we collected during January to March 2023 as well as breakdown of positive, negative reviews per service. We analysed residents rating of their overall experience to get this data (1* and 2* = negative, 3* = neutral, 4* and 5* = positive)

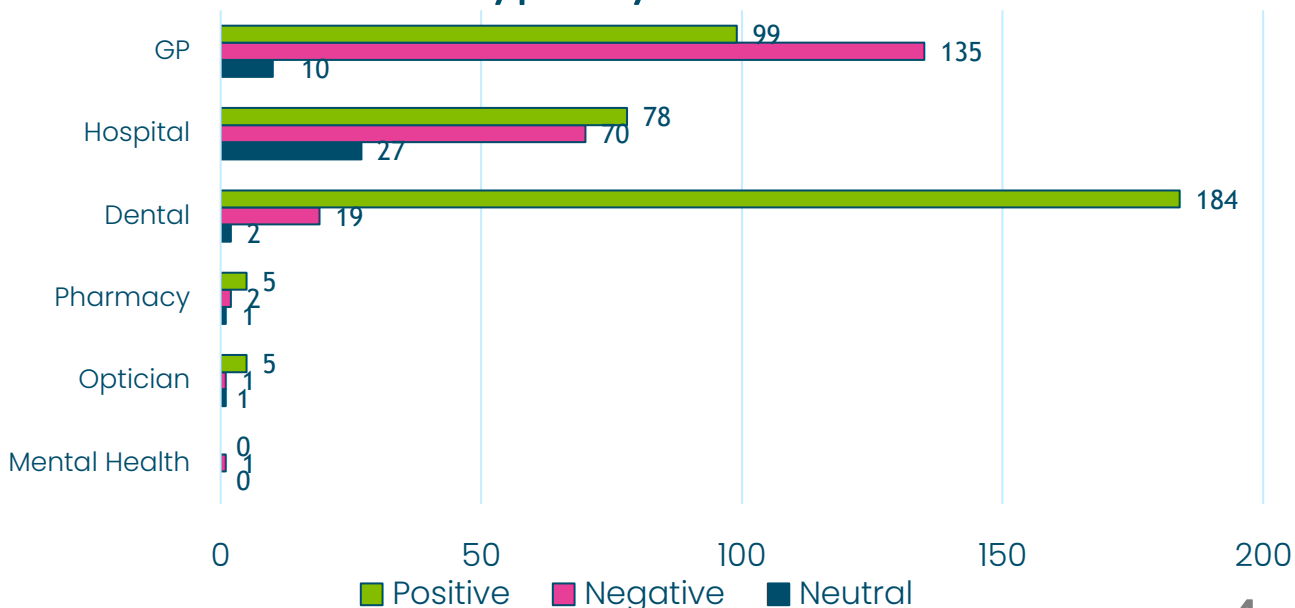


640 reviews

about health and care services were shared with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

Top Service Types	No of Reviews	Positive percentage of reviews
GP	244	41%
Dental	205	90%
Hospital	175	45%
Pharmacy	8	63%
Optician	7	71%
Mental Health	1	0%

Service Type by Sentiment



Experiences of GP Practices



What people told us about GP Practices

"From the receptionists to the clinical team, this GP Practice is first rate. Things are done in an efficient and competent manner; queries are answered promptly and test results are amazingly fast."

"I have moved surgeries a few times in London and must say it is definitely better than others I have used. Although I sometimes have to wait long, I always get to speak to someone to arrange an appointment for myself and my children.

The majority of the staff are professional and really try to manage the needs and request for the large and diverse amount of people who visit the GP."

"I have always had a positive response from every member of staff at this surgery.

Reception staff are efficient and thorough, other health care practitioners are supportive and knowledgeable and the doctors are compassionate and empathic and include you in discussion instead of using top-down approach.

I can honestly say this practice is first rate, helpful, friendly reception staff, brilliant triage service, fantastic doctors and the resident paramedic.

"Having to wait 19 days for a telephone appointment with a doctor is just unacceptable. Really disappointing and sad that I've had to now pay privately to see a doctor about this issue instead. Very poor service which is a shame."

"It is impossible to get an appointment. Literally impossible. The phone lines take over an hour for you to get through, Patient Access bookings don't work, and emails go unresponded to. Utterly dreadful. The doctors here are great though, just impossible to actually see them.

"Almost impossible to get an in-person appointment with a doctor, and within a reasonable timescale."

"I am very disappointed with how things changed in this practice over the years. Almost a month wait for a face-to-face appointment with the problem that is affecting me day and night.

Receptionist previously discouraged me to book a face-to-face appointment even though it is clearly something that can't be diagnosed without seeing it.

GP Services

No. of Reviews	244
Positive	41%
Negative	55%
Neutral	4%



Questions we asked residents

As part of our new patient experience approach, we asked residents a series of questions which would help us better understand experiences of access and quality.

The questions we asked were:

Q1) How do you find getting an appointment?

Q2) How do you find getting through to someone at your GP practice on the phone?

Q3) How do you find the quality of online consultations?

Q4) How do you find the quality of telephone consultations?

Q5) How did you find the attitudes of staff at the service?

Q6) How would you rate the quality of treatment and care received?

Please note that for Question 1 and 2 the options we provided matched those of the national GP Patient Survey (Very Easy – Not at All Easy) to allow our data to be comparable with the NHS.

Participants were asked to choose between 1-5* (Terrible – Excellent)

Due to a variety of factors, we will not be providing analysis of Question 1-6 in this return. Our findings will focus on what people thought worked well and what could be improved.

Thematic analysis

In addition to the access and quality questions we ask about GP practices we also ask two further questions (**What is working well? and What could be improved?**) to help get a more detailed picture.

Each experience we collect is reviewed and up to 5 themes and sub-themes are applied. The charts below show the top 5 positive and negative issues received between January and March 2023.

A list of the themes can be found on the Healthwatch Lewisham website

Top 5 Positive Issues	Total count
Quality of staff – health professionals	55
Staff attitudes	27
Treatment - experience	25
Quality of staff – administrative staff	24
Communication with patients	17

Top 5 Negative Issues	Total count
Getting through on the telephone	49
Appointment availability	49
Booking appointments	40
Staff attitudes – administrative staff	23
Lack of communication	19

Primary Care Networks

Primary care networks (PCNs) are groups of GP practices within the same area which work together to support patients. Within Lewisham there are **6 PCN'S** covering the borough. These are:

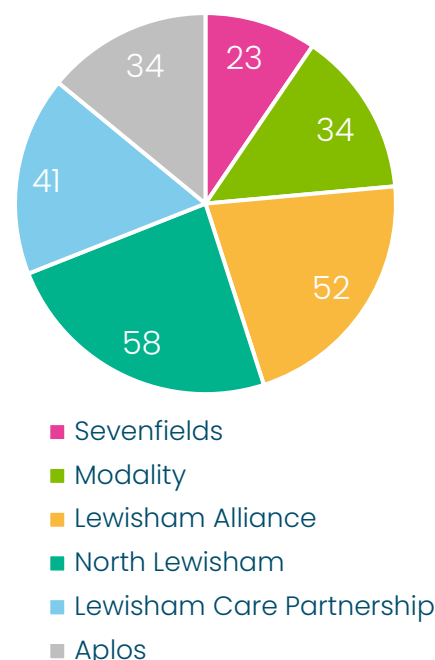
- Aplos
- Lewisham Alliance
- Lewisham Care Partnership
- North Lewisham
- Modality
- Sevenfields

Between January and March 2023, the PCN's which received the most reviews were North Lewisham and Lewisham Alliance.

In our next report, we will compare the PCN's by the average ratings given for the access/quality questions and overall experience. This will help us to understand the variance of experience across the borough.

We will also compare the top positive and negative themes.

Total Reviews per PCN



What has worked well?

Below is a list of the key positive aspects relating to GP practices between January and March 2023

Quality of staff – health professionals

82% of reviews that covered the quality of health professionals were positive.



Patients valued the high level of professionalism and knowledge doctors and nurses have in order to give them effective treatment and advice.

In general, patients across the borough are extremely appreciative when they can talk to a health professional in their GP practice.

Staff Attitudes

66% of reviews that discussed staff attitudes were positive.



As mentioned in our Q3 report, patients have traditionally been vocal about their praise for staff. This continues to be the situation between January and March.

Patients mainly found staff to be friendly, supportive and willing to listen to their concerns.

Communication with patients

77% of reviews that directly mentioned communication between patients and health professionals were positive.



Most of the time, patients found the information and advice given about their condition or concerns to be useful. Strong communication is a key reason why Lewisham residents consider staff in GP practices to be of a high quality.

Quality of staff – administrative staff

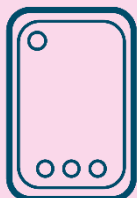
55% of reviews that mentioned the quality of administrative staff was positive which shows that there is a mixed picture in the borough especially when it comes to receptionists.



Patients tend to be more complimentary of receptionists when they feel the GP service is well co-ordinated and they can be seen by health professionals relatively easy. Issues tend to occur when there are access issues.

What could be improved?

Below is a list of the key areas for improvement relating to GP practices between January and March 2023



Getting through on the telephone

89% of reviews that mentioned patients trying to get through on the telephone to their practice were negative.

A substantial number of patients continue to be frustrated at the length of time it would take for them to speak to a receptionist. This was exacerbated by the fact that there would often not be any appointments once they managed to speak to someone.



Appointment availability and booking appointments

88% of reviews that discussed appointment availability and 82% about booking appointments were negative.

This is a longstanding issue in not just the borough but nationally. The majority of patients are unable to get an appointment in a timeframe which they consider reasonable to address their health issue.

We regularly hear about people joining long telephone queues at 8am every day.

Access issues were not just limited to telephone booking, people also cited a lack of available appointments through online methods.



Staff attitudes – administrative staff

68% of comments that mentioned the attitudes of administrative staff were negative.

Patients who were unhappy with the behaviour of receptionists explained that they felt they were rude and not receptive of the issues and stresses they were experiencing. Some felt that they have become unofficial gatekeepers and are making decisions about appointment availability which should be left to the expertise of the health professionals.



Lack of communication

Whilst we mentioned that generally patients felt that they had positive dialogue with health professionals, this was not true of general communication with the service. 60% of all reviews about communication were negative.

A lot of this is related to communication around appointments, for example a few people were promised call backs but never received them.

Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations for GP practices in Lewisham based on the findings in this section

Getting through on the telephone

1. We continue to recommend that all GP practices implement a call back system which guarantees patients can speak to someone when phone lines are busy. This will help somewhat to relieve patients' frustrations when queueing on the phone.

Booking appointments and appointment availability

1. Booking appointments remains a longstanding issue in the borough. We recommend that GP services reviewing their appointment procedures and identify opportunities to change the system.

We recognise that NHS England have stated that appointment systems will be changing from the 8am traditional format. We are very interested to see what this will mean for Lewisham GPs and patients.

Changing perceptions of receptionists

1. Patients can be frustrated by receptionists who they perceive as unofficial gatekeepers of appointments and who make decisions about availability which they are not qualified to do.

This sentiment is something we have heard previously, and we suggest that GP services work closely with residents to explain the responsibilities of receptionists and training they have undertaken in order to address or resolve this perception.

Experiences of Hospital Services



What people told us about Hospital Services

"Very friendly staff, great nurses and doctors. I had an experience with the physio and he talked to me for over 40 minutes, so I left relieved and very happy. The medication the nurse has given me has helped me walk like a normal person again."

"My husband was seen through the Urgent Care Centre; I could not have been happier with the attention he received.

The staff were run off their feet but still had time to show compassion to those in need. We did have to wait for a bed, but he was not left unattended throughout. Thank you to all those staff involved.."

"Prompt and efficient service. Procedure was very well explained by the Radiologist who put me at ease."

"Prompt attendance by staff on all occasions. It is obvious that the staff are well trained and well recruited for their role."

"Horrible experience, arrived a 9:30 am to A&E and just left now at 5:30 pm. That's 8 hours wait!! One doctor just didn't show up."

"Huge miscommunication in bookings for appointment. It would be better to have good communication and time to plan the appointment."

"My appointment was cancelled two times without an email or call or text. Then made an appointment I was never told about. A real lack of communication."

"Having an effective system would be helpful to remind patients of appointments and ensure they don't miss future opportunities to engage with the team.

Since that one appointment was missed there has been no outreach to rebook or schedule a new time, so now I'm unsure who to contact next or when/if I should expect a follow up."

Hospital Services

No. of Reviews	175
Positive	45%
Negative	40%
Neutral	15%



Questions we asked residents

As part of our new patient experience approach, we asked residents a series of questions which would help us better understand experiences of access and quality.

The questions we asked were:

- Q1) How did you find getting a referral/appointment at the hospital?
- Q2) How do you find getting through to someone on the phone?
- Q3) How do you find the waiting times at the hospital?
- Q4) How do you think the communication is between your hospital and GP practice?
- Q5) How do you find the attitudes of staff at the service?
- Q6) How would you rate the quality of treatment and care received?

Participants were asked to choose between 1-5* (Terrible – Excellent) for all questions.

Due to a variety of factors, we will not be providing analysis of Question 1-6 in this return. Our findings will focus on what people thought worked well and what could be improved.

Individual hospitals

Lewisham residents access a variety of different hospitals depending on factors such as choice, locality and specialist requirements. During the last three months we heard experiences about the following hospitals:

- University Hospital Lewisham
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital

96% of all hospital reviews we received between January and March 2023 related to University Hospital Lewisham (UHL).

We would normally compare local hospitals in order to understand the variance of experience. However, on this occasion we can only analyse the experiences of UHL.

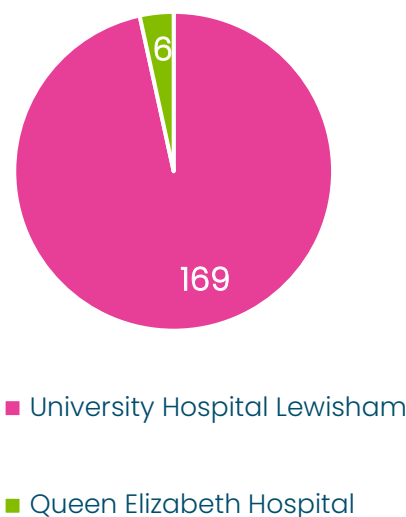
Due to a variety of factors, we are unable to provide analysis of the access and quality questions.

However, as well as the access and quality questions, we also ask two further questions (*What is working well?* and *What could be improved?*) to help get a more detailed picture.

Each experience we collect is reviewed and up to 5 themes and sub-themes are applied. Our taxonomy was developed using Healthwatch England guidance and organisational expertise about patient experience.

The charts below show the top positive and negative issues relating to University Hospital Lewisham in the last three months.

Total Reviews per Hospital



Top 5 Positive Issues	Total count
Staff attitudes	30
Treatment–experience	25
Quality of staff – health professionals	20
Quality of staff – administrative staff	12
Staff – professionalism	7

Top Negative Issues	Total count
Waiting Times (punctuality and queuing on arrival)	31
Lack of communication	23
Access – Information and advice	10
Appointment availability	7
Booking appointments	7

What has worked well?

Below is a list of the key positive aspects about University Hospital Lewisham between January and March 2023.

Experiences of hospital services are far more mixed when compared to the previous three months where nearly all reviews about UHL were positive.

Staff attitudes

83% of reviews that covered the attitudes of at UHL were positive.



Patients who shared positive comments described their time in hospital as pleasant which was largely helped by staff who were friendly and dedicated. They made people feel cared for in what can often be a nervous experience.

Treatment – experience

87% of reviews specifically mentioning peoples' experience of their treatment were positive.



As mentioned in previous reports, we often find that staff attitudes influence patients' opinion of their treatment experience.

Patients valued the quality and efficiency of service they received. Furthermore, staff were considered helpful as they clearly explained what people should expect when being treated at the hospital

What could be improved?

Below is a list of the areas for improvement relating to UHL between January and March 2023.

Waiting Times (punctuality and queueing on arrival)

79% of reviews relating to waiting times at University Hospital Lewisham were negative.



Patients highlighted their frustration with long waiting times at A&E. Several patients highlighted having to wait more than 4 hours to be seen by consultant with limited updates from staff.

Long waiting times were also cited by patients who shared experiences as part of our Outpatients project. Departments such as Orthopaedics regularly saw appointments delayed between 40 and 60 minutes.

Lack of communication

88% of reviews relating to communication at University Hospital Lewisham were negative.

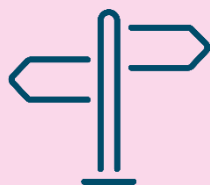


Linked to the previous issue, patients were unhappy about the length of time they had to wait in the hospital before being seen by a health professional and the limited communication around why they were delays.

There were also issues with communication around appointments with patients experiencing short notice cancellations or being confused about when their appointment was due to conflicting information.

Access – information and advice

77% of comments relating to access information were negative.



Due to issues around appointments, patients wanted improve communication about timings and what they should expect.

A small number of people also found it difficult navigating themselves to the right Outpatients department.

Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations for University Hospital Lewisham based on the findings in this section

Waiting Times (punctuality and queueing on arrival)

1. We would reiterate our recommendation from our Q3 report that University Hospital Lewisham should continue to review their internal processes within the A&E department to see how they could reduce the length of waiting time which has increased since the pandemic ended.
2. We advise that the Outpatients department looks to reduce their waiting times and to ensure that they clearly communicate with patients when there are significant delays.

Improved communication

1. Patients had varying preferences for how they would like to receive information about appointments. We suggest that UHL ensures that preferred communication methods are noted for all patients which will hopefully reduce confusion around appointments.
2. We recognise that within the last few years UHL has reviewed its external signage to support patients find the right department. Based on our reviews there is still room for improvement, and we recommend that Outpatients staff further engage with patients around this issue.

Equalities Snapshot

During our engagement we also ask residents to voluntarily share with us information about themselves such as gender, age, ethnicity etc. This allows us to understand whether there are differences in experience provided to people based on their personal characteristics.

Not everyone chooses to share their personal information when giving a response. The snapshot does not include 'prefer not to say' responses.

This section pulls out interesting statistics when we analysed overall experience ratings. A full demographics breakdown can be found in the appendix.



Gender

During the last three months, 48% of the men (31) we spoke to had a positive experience of University Hospital Lewisham. By comparison, only 40% of women (105) rated their last hospital visit as 'Good' or 'Excellent.'

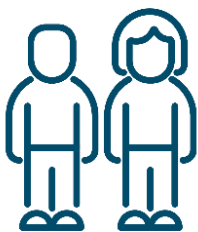
Women had more negative than positive experiences with 45% describing their time as 'Poor' or 'Terrible.'



Age

65-74 year olds shared the highest number(14) of positive experiences about hospitals. 61% of all feedback praised their services.

The highest number of negative reviews came from 35-44 year olds, with 50% of this feedback being 1* or 2*.



Ethnicity

White British residents (72) shared the most feedback about UHL. 43% of these reviews were negative while 35% were positive.

The next highest was Black British (16) who primarily had positive experiences with 63% of reviews being 'Excellent' or 'Good'

While a small sample size, it's interesting to see these figures as traditionally we have seen mixed feelings from Black communities about local hospitals.

Experiences of Dental Services



Dental Services

No. of Reviews	135
Positive	90%
Negative	9%
Neutral	1%



Questions we asked residents

As part of our new patient experience approach, we asked residents a series of questions which would help us better understand experiences of access and quality.

The questions we asked were:

Q1) How did you find it registering with an NHS dentist?
(within the last 12 months)

Q2) How do you find getting NHS appointments?

Q3) If you have been asked to pay for NHS dental treatment, how clearly do you feel the bands/costs were explained to you?

Q4) How helpful are staff in explaining your dental treatment?

Q5) How do you find the attitudes of staff at the service?

Due to a variety of factors, we will not be providing analysis of Question 1-5 in this return. Our findings will focus on what people thought worked well and what could be improved.

Thematic analysis

In addition to the access and quality questions we ask about Dental services we also ask two further questions (**What is working well?** and **What could be improved?**) to help get a more detailed picture.

Each experience we collect is reviewed and up to 5 themes and sub-themes themes are applied. The charts below show the top 5 positive and negative issues received between January and March 2023.

Top 5 Positive Issues	Total reviews
Quality of staff-health professionals	93
Staff attitudes	70
Staff - professionalism	47
Quality of treatment	38
Communication with patients (treatment explanation, verbal advice)	32

Top 5 Negative Issues	Total reviews
Quality of Treatment	8
Staff attitudes - administrative staff	7
Quality of staff-administrative staff	5
Treatment - effectiveness	4
Quality of staff-health professionals	3



What has worked well?



Quality of staff – health professionals

97% of reviews that discussed the quality of health professionals were positive.

Residents were extremely vocal in their praise for dentists over the last three months. The vast majority found a wide range of dental services in the borough provided an excellent service because of a knowledgeable and helpful staff team. Patients valued efficient processes which allowed them to get the outcomes they wanted with their teeth.



Staff attitudes

97% of reviews that covered the attitudes of staff within dental practices were positive.

Patients regularly described staff as being polite, kind and compassionate which helped patients feel relaxed. Praise was not just singled out to the health professionals; receptionists were often described as friendly and helped create a warm environment.



Communication with patients

97% of reviews that covered communication were positive. A key element to patients feeling that they received a high-quality service was the quality and clarity of advice given by the health professionals.

Dentists were found to be extremely thorough when discussing treatment plans allowing patients to feel informed and reassured.

What could be improved?



Quality of treatment/ issues with administrative staff

It should be noted that great care wasn't universal with 17% of reviews covering the issue being negative.

These reviews cited poor levels of treatment which left patients having concerns about their teeth. Within the negative reviews there were also frustrations with a low level of customer service with receptionists being found rude.

Recommendations

Customer Service Training

Dental practices were primarily praised but where this wasn't the case, we advise services to ensure training for staff to help them interact appropriately with patients when they are worried about their teeth following an appointment.