

North Somerset Village Voices



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Healthwatch North Somerset

3rd Floor, The Sion

Crown Glass Place

Nailsea BS48 1RB

01275 851400

contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

HWNS Village Voices Rural Engagement Project September 2016

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Rural Engagement in North Somerset

Introduction

Healthwatch North Somerset collects information from the public about their experiences of local health and social care services. We call this information 'Intelligence'. Intelligence is gathered through a wide range of methods including letters, website, emails, surveys, telephone calls, meetings, social media, Enter and View visits, talking face to face and from partner organisations. We listen to patient experiences, base our work on them and inform commissioners and providers about good practice and areas for service improvement.

We also gather information on specific issues through surveys, meetings or by working with a specific group of people. Healthwatch North Somerset takes great care to treat all information objectively.

Once gathered, the intelligence is collated onto our information database, we analyse the data each month to ascertain trends. This information is shared with health and social care service providers, local commissioners and all other relevant bodies. All intelligence is shared with Healthwatch England.

Healthwatch North Somerset would like to thank to everyone who contributed and provided information for this report.

About Healthwatch North Somerset

Healthwatch North Somerset's statutory duty and remit, which is laid out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012, is to provide a voice for people who use health and adult social care services, by:

Influencing

- Giving people an opportunity to have a say about their local health and social care services, including those whose voice isn't usually heard.
- Taking public views to the people who make decisions - including having a representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Feeding issues back to government via Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Signposting

- Providing information about health and social care services in the local area. Advising people on where to go for specialist help or information (signposting).
- Helping people make choices and decisions about their care.
- Working closely with other groups and organisations in the local area.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), Healthwatch North Somerset has the following powers and functions.

- A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to requests of information within 20 working days.
- A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to recommendations made by Healthwatch North Somerset within 20 working days.
- Make reports and recommendations about services known to commissioners, providers and regulators of health and social care services in North Somerset
- A duty on service providers to allow entry to authorised Healthwatch North Somerset members to conduct announced or unannounced 'enter and view' visits to assess services.
- A seat on North Somerset's Health and Wellbeing Board (People and Communities Board), to promote health improvements and tackle health inequalities.
- A mechanism to make recommendations to Healthwatch England, which may include advising the Care Quality Commission about special reviews or investigations to conduct.

Our Mission:

By offering all people of North Somerset a strong voice, we will improve the quality of local health and social care today and for the future.



Background

North Somerset's population in 2015 was 209,944 and described by DEFRA as 'urban with significant rural populations'. The rural populations make up 26% - 49% of the North Somerset population depending on whether the village areas on the fringe of towns are included.

There is a pattern of relative wealth in rural areas in North Somerset, with these ranked amongst the least deprived 25% of rural areas nationally when using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).¹

However, four of the villages this project has engaged with are amongst the 20% most deprived rural areas nationally due to one IMD indicator, which measures barriers to services including, distance to public transport and housing. These are Felton, Wrington East, Banwell West and Kingston Seymour near Yatton.

There are age imbalances in North Somerset's rural communities. Older people make up a larger portion of the population than the average nationally. These numbers are expected to increase significantly in coming years: by 2025 the over 65 population in North Somerset is expected to increase by 50%, and by 69% by 2030².

Both the 18-24 and 25-49 age groups are significantly under-represented in villages in North Somerset. The county is described as having a significantly aging population compared to its neighbouring West of England areas and to national averages.

The male/female split in rural areas is the same as it is in other parts of the county where 51% are female and 49% male.

¹ <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/indices-of-multiple-deprivation-briefing-note-November-2015.pdf>

² Department of Health POPPI statistics

In a wide ranging Place Survey of North Somerset in 2008, respondents from rural areas were slightly more satisfied with all council services but were more likely to be dissatisfied with traffic congestion and public transport. ³

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this engagement project is to report the views and opinions of the rural population in the South and East of the county. Seeking out their experience of Health and Social Care services had two main objectives; to find out where services may be good and should receive positive recognition and to identify where services are not meeting needs.

The engagement events were opportunities for villagers to articulate if living in a village has an impact on their health and wellbeing. While collecting this feedback we also took time to develop links with key partners in rural areas, establish relationships with leaders of groups and activities and access some of the harder to reach residents in these communities.

Methods

A community engagement approach was adopted, as it is an empowering method of giving service users a voice in how services are delivered.

The information was obtained using an intelligence record sheet. (see Appendix 1).

Local knowledge has been provided by the Village Agents (West of England Rural Network) who are funded by the Curo Group. This enabled us to access groups and organisations in villages.

³ consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/Place_survey_2008

Parishes and churches with Websites and Newsletters or online Village Diaries have been a source of information, as has the North Somerset Council Online Directory⁴.

The report summarises feedback collected from 97 people at 15 settings in villages in North Somerset from May-September 2016.

The villages visited are grouped into areas which are shown alongside the locations of engagement activities.

Blagdon, Butcombe, Dundry, Felton, Winford and Flax Bourton

Engagement

- Careline coffee morning at Felton Village Hall
- Souper lunch at Flax Bourton Church
- Lunch Club at Dundry Village Hall
- Lunch Club at Blagdon Village
- Women's Group at Felton Village Hall
- Wi-Fi Wednesday at St Andrews Church, Blagdon

GP Practices

Residents mainly use the GP Practices below:

- Backwell and Nailsea Medical Practice - which is linked with Long Ashton Surgery
- Chew Valley Medical Practice - which serves Blagdon and Dundry with a surgery in Chew Stoke, which is located in the bordering county of Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).

In the area bordering BANES, people using Chew Valley Medical Practice in Chew Stoke use specialist services in BANES and are often referred to Royal United Hospital, Keynsham or Paulton Hospital.

⁴ <http://nsod.n-somerset.gov.uk/kb5/northsomerset/directory/home.page>

Availability of public and community transport:

a) Departing from Bristol airport, the A1 bus takes passengers to Bristol Bus Station on Marlborough Street, where there is a short uphill walk to the Bristol Royal Infirmary, and additional bus routes to other hospitals including Southmead.

b) A circular loop (97) bus goes through Felton to Bristol Airport three times in the morning and three times in late afternoon for commuters. (First Bus stopped the service through Felton in 2015 and local concerns caused North Somerset Council to fund the bus on a temporary basis depending on use).

c) A member's minibus is run by Winford and Regil Parish Community Transport. The priority is retired people.

Banwell, Winscombe, Hutton, Bleadon

Engagement

- Lunch Club for retired singles at Winscombe Community Centre
- Winscombe Market at the Community Centre
- Banwell Seniors Club at the Village Hall

GP Practices

Residents mainly use the GP practices below:

- Winscombe Surgery
- Banwell Surgery - which also visits Sandford retirement village (St Monica's Trust).

Volunteer transport networks:

- Churchill and Langford minibus began in June 2016 travelling to Banwell Village and is available to able-bodied and disabled members. A timetable is on the Churchill Parish Council website. It is part of the Minibus Society which has

been providing transport for the villages of Churchill, Upper and Lower Langford, Burrington, Rickford, Shipham, Sandford, Winscombe for many years.

- Banwell Fish Car scheme, for Banwell residents
- Winscombe Contact Scheme is for Winscombe residents or patients of Winscombe (Hillyfields) Surgery, which provides transport to medical appointments, and to the lunch club, for residents who are unable to use public transport or transport is not available.

Sandford, Congresbury, Yatton, Wick St Lawrence and Puxton

Engagement

- Senior Community Link at Yatton Village Hall
- Coffee Morning, Methodist Church Hall, Congresbury
- Sandford Station Memory Café at the Retirement Village

GP Practices

Residents mainly use the GP practices below:

- Yatton and Congresbury branches of the Mendip Vale Practice.

The Congresbury branch is open in the mornings and has three GPs on Monday and Wednesday morning, two on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and one on Friday morning.

The Yatton surgery is open 8.30-6.30 every day except Thursdays, which has extended hours until 8pm.

Community transport available:

- Congresbury Carers - transport for the elderly and those unable to use public transport

- Yatton and District Carers - community transport serving Nailsea, Backwell, Claverham, Yatton and Congresbury.

Brockley, Churchill, Langford, Redhill and Wrington

Engagement

- Christchurch coffee morning
- Drop-in at the Mendip Vale Medical Practice - in Langford
- Wrington Friendship Club in the Memorial Hall. Minibus is available if transport is required.

GP Practices

Residents mainly use the GP practices below:

- Mendip Vale Medical Practice in Langford. The Group has a surgery in Yatton, a morning surgery in Congresbury and a morning surgery in Wrington.

Transport networks for appointments are:

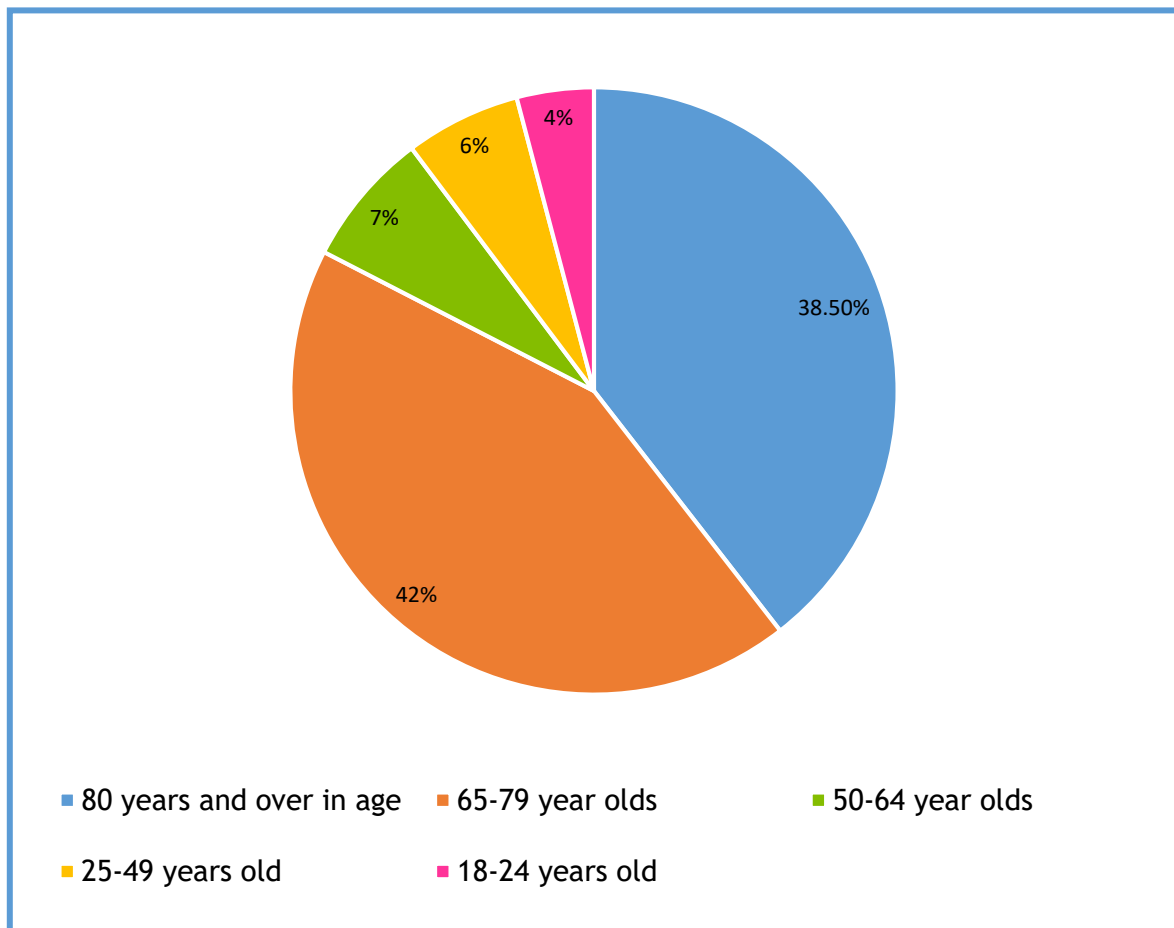
- Wrington Minibus Society - making local trips on a timetable.
- Wrington Helpline- for those who don't drive, have no access to transport or need assistance to a medical related appointment. Travels through Wrington, Redhill, Downside, Burrington, Lye Hole, Cowslip Green and Aldwick.
- A2 bus, stops at the end of the road near Mendip Vale GP Practice on Pudding Pie Lane and there is a 5 minute walk into the surgery.

Results and findings

Age

Respondents indicated they were from the following age groups;

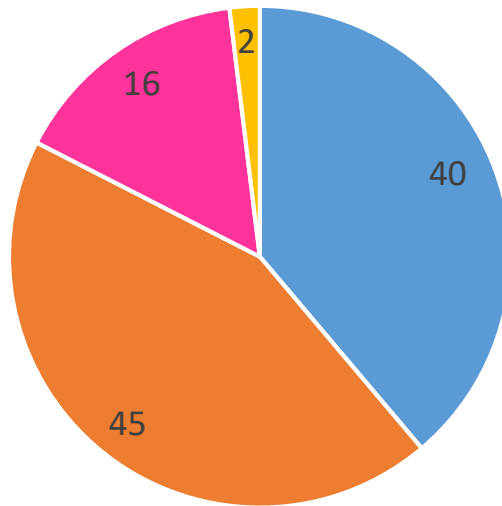
- 38.5% were 80 years and over in age
- 42% were 65-79 year olds
- 7% were 50-64 year olds
- 6% were 25-49 years old
- 4% were 18-24 years old



Feedback Issues

The feedback was placed into four categories: compliment, concern, complaint and point of view, as the pie chart shows below:

Breakdown of Feedback Issues



■ Compliment ■ Concern ■ Complaint ■ Point of View

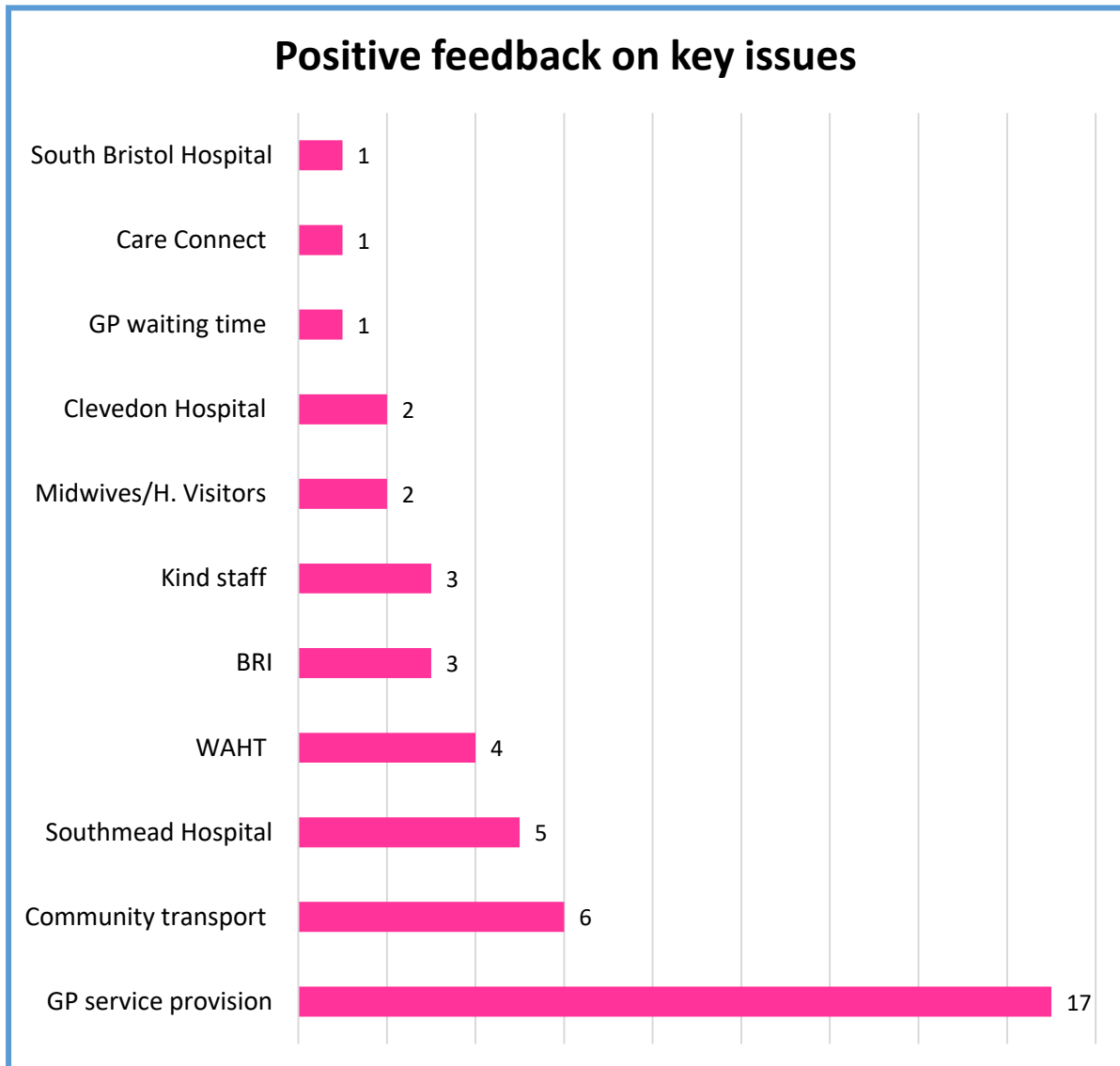
There were sixteen pieces of feedback where a respondent complained about an issue, forty where an issue was complimented, and forty-five where a concern was voiced and two points of view were raised.

It should be noted that a number of respondents made both negative and positive comments.



Compliments

There were 40 compliments made and categorised as follows:



The largest numbers of compliments were about the quality of the service provided by GP practices.

Seventeen positive comments were recorded which covered care, competence and professionalism.

Examples of the feedback from respondents who complimented the GP service provisions are:

“Excellent and considerate care.”

“Competent and friendly.”

“Very happy with the service, use it frequently.”

“I couldn’t get an appointment but they called me back to say they could see me after surgery had finished at 7. Very helpful indeed.”

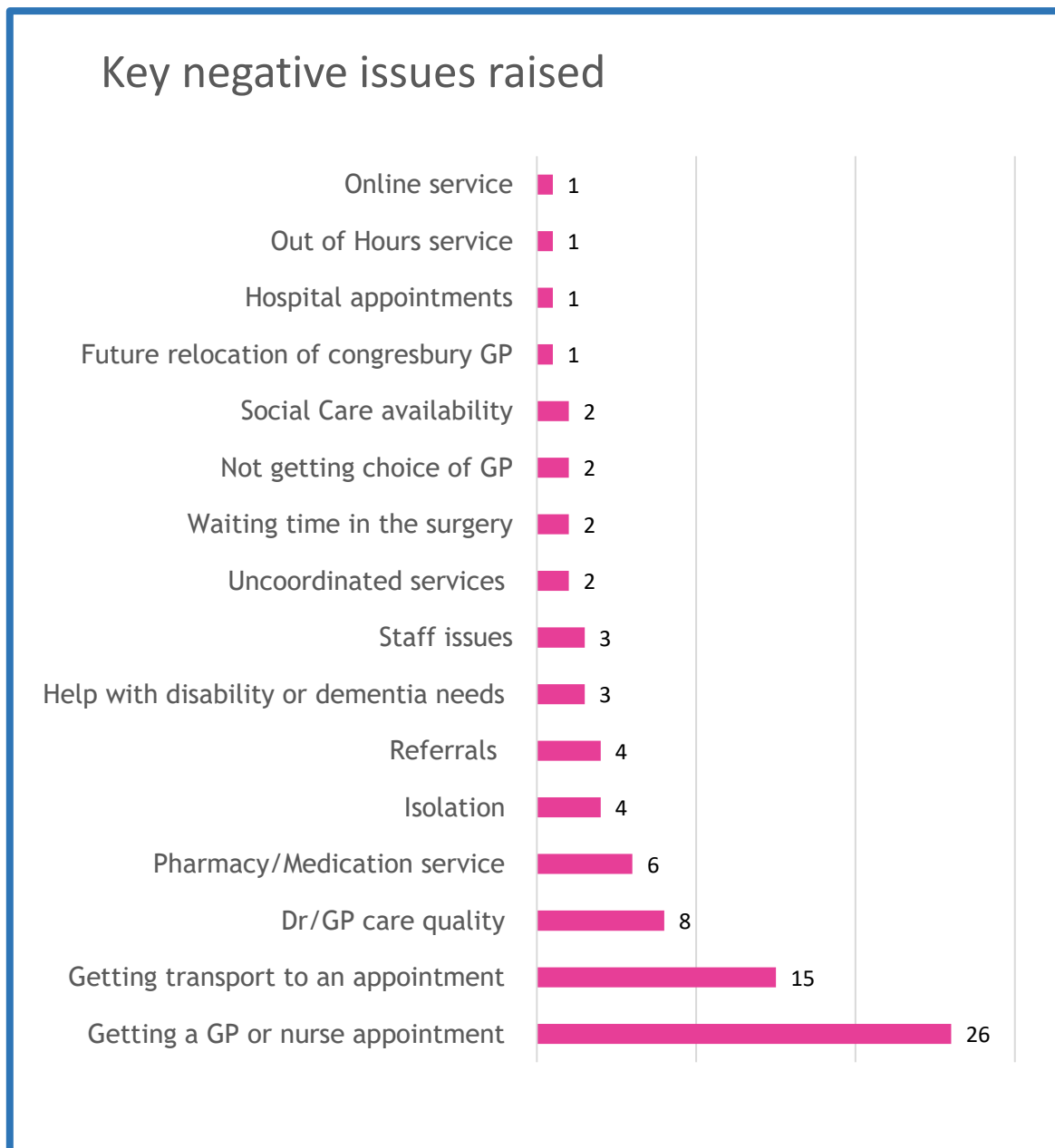


Community transport feedback

On the issue of community transport there were six positive comments. An example is the following:

“The people who organise the community transport are very good”.

The feedback was categorised into the categories shown below:



These negative comments covered a variety of issues including wanting to see a chosen GP, rudeness of staff or too few staff, waiting times for referral to other services and general anxiety or concern about isolation.

Social Care

There were two comments about social care, both from paying clients who said

“Getting a carer for some services can be challenging. It’s a long drive out here”.

Appointments

There were fifteen pieces of feedback about issues relating to the problems attending a surgery appointment due to:

- transport being inadequate
- bus services taking too long
- distance being too far to navigate due to lack of mobility
- old age
- not being able to drive.

There were twenty-six pieces of feedback which were complaints or concerns on the issue of nurse or GP appointments at a GP practice.



The following are some of the examples of feedback on the issues most frequently raised:

“Appointments are very hard to come by”.

“Surgery has stopped opening in the afternoons. A very limited service now”.

“My surgery has moved. Appointments available but I can’t get to them now”.

“If I can’t get an appointment on the day the bus comes through the village I have to get a taxi”.

“Have to travel by car to my GP as my village only has a branch surgery”.

“My wife relies on me to take her. There has no bus service that has gone near the surgery for two years now”.

“The pharmacy is often out of stock”.



Summary of our findings

- 16.5% of respondents to this survey were satisfied with their GP service provision.
- 5.8% liked the community transport provision which is widespread in the county and relies on community volunteers.
- 14.5% of respondents complained they had problems getting to appointments because of transport issues including comments about the distance needed to travel to an appointment, the limitation of bus services, time needed to allow for public transport journeys, timetables and the relocation of a surgery away from a bus route.
- 25.2% of the negative feedback was about problems accessing appointments at surgeries.

These are not new issues; they represent continuing difficulties for local people in rural areas accessing health care and which have previously been raised in Healthwatch North Somerset Community Transport Report.

Solutions need to take into account the impact of the current merging or federating of rural GP Practices and the ageing population of rural areas.



Recommendations

Healthwatch regulations stipulate that service providers and commissioners have a duty to respond to local Healthwatch reports and recommendations within 20 working days, in writing, to acknowledge receipt and to explain what action they intend to take or if they do not intend to take action they must explain why. (Health and Social Care Act 2012: Addendum to summary report: issues relating to local Healthwatch regulations).

Healthwatch North Somerset recommends the following based on the feedback received by the public in North Somerset. We believe the following three recommendations to be achievable, affordable and evidence based:

- 25% of respondents reported that they had difficulty accessing appointments. We recommend that GP surgeries increase appointment availability of doctors and nurses especially in branch surgeries.
- Almost 15% of respondents informed us that that had difficulty getting to appointments due to transport problems. We recommend that federated surgeries ensure that consideration is given to a patients ability to travel and offer appointments at surgeries nearest to that patients home.
- That merged surgeries with a large population reach consider providing a minibus service for those patients who are identified to have access issues or subsidise the community car schemes.

Distribution of the Report

This report will be forwarded to the following parties for a response prior to becoming available to the wider public.

North Somerset Council

North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

North Somerset Community Partnership (NSCP)

It will also be forwarded to:

Healthwatch England

NHS England

Care Quality Commission

Appendix 1:



Record of Intelligence for Rural Project

What is the nature of your feedback?

Complaint		Concern		Compliment		Other	
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Which service are you commenting on?

Service	Location Details
GP	
Hospital	
Dentist	
Social Care	
Community Health Provision	

Your feedback about the above service and when this happened

What impact if any does living in a village have on your health and wellbeing – good and/or bad?

Appendix 2: Acknowledgements

Healthwatch North Somerset would like to thank the public in the rural areas of North Somerset for providing feedback on their experiences. In particular we would like to thank the organisations listed on pages 7-10 of this report.

This report acknowledges Village Agents working with The West of England Rural Network (WERN) for kindly providing key links to village activities and networks.

Thanks to Lesley Viney at the Mendip Vale GP Practice in Langford where Healthwatch North Somerset held two drop-in engagement activities.

Appendix 2: Responses from Commissioners and Providers of services

North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

North Somerset CCG, thanks Healthwatch North Somerset for forwarding the report on Village Voices. It was very interesting to see the feedback from our rural communities. We are particularly aware of the transport issues for patients and understand that is an ongoing concern. We note the recommendations made and will ensure that this report is highlighted at the Primary Care Joint Commissioning Working Group.

North Somerset Community Partnership

North Somerset Community Partnership welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Village Voices report, produced by Healthwatch North Somerset. As the community health provider in North Somerset we recognise the concerns raised within the report for our population living in rural areas, and the associated challenges faced within General Practice.

North Somerset Community Partnership has recently begun implementing a new service model and are committed to developing services that are accessible and locally based. This model is designed around the needs of the local populations and operates from four distinct Locality teams, one of these being the Rurals Team which covers the villages which contributed to the report. The Locality Teams are working to bring services closer to local people, including an increase in the number of leg clubs which enable people to access care and support in local community buildings such as church halls.

Having received the Healthwatch North Somerset report, Village Voices, it is clear that more can be done. North Somerset Community Partnership will respond by working with General Practices in rural areas to see how services can be delivered closer to patient's homes. Our Locality Lead for the Rurals is already engaged with the Village Agents and we will ensure that going forward all the Locality Leaders and their teams develop working relationships with the Village Agent project.

The North Somerset Community Partnership will also work closely with the transport providers available to support people in accessing services. This will give the opportunity for members of the rural community who need our support to access advice and support in a timely and localised way.

Appendix 3: Useful information

- Wi-Fi Wednesday, St Andrews Church, Blagdon
- Careline coffee morning, Felton Village Hall (2nd & 4th Wednesdays)
- Souper lunch, Flax Bourton Church (1st Tuesday of the month)
- Dundry Village Hall Lunch Club (3rd Friday in the month)
- Blagdon Village lunch club (Wednesday)
- Felton Village Hall Tuesday women's group
- Winscombe Community Centre lunch club - retired singles
- Winscombe Market Thursday mornings at the Community Centre
- Senior Community Link at Yatton Village Hall
- Coffee Morning at Methodist Church Hall, Congresbury
- Sandford Station Memory Café at the Retirement Village
- Banwell Seniors Club at the Village Hall
- Christchurch Coffee Morning (1st Wednesday each month)
- Wrington Friendship Club at the Memorial Hall (Friday 2.30pm-4.30pm).
Minibus is available if transport is required
- Blagdon Good Companions Club for the young at heart. St Andrews Church
- Transport schemes in North Somerset
https://www.northsomersetccg.nhs.uk/media/medialibrary/2014/05/ns_dementia_transport.pdf

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3rd Floor

The Sion

Crown Glass Place

Nailsea

BS48 1RB

Tel: 01275 851 400

Email: contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

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